

Project Profile—Belongil Bridge, Byron Bay NSW



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A Brighter Future ... Byron Bay, NSW

Belongil Bridge is a reinforced concrete structure, built circa 1971 with pre-stressed deck planks supported by five concrete headstocks, each supported by five columns. It carries a busy regional road across a saltwater creek near Byron Bay, NSW.

In 2017, Byron Shire Council engaged MCM to carry out repair works, designed to extend the serviceable life of the structure by 30 years. The columns were heavily contaminated with chlorides and in need of repair, and the traffic guardrail sections were heavily corroded and needed full refurbishment.

The work presented a complex set of safety and environmental challenges requiring traffic management and night shifts for the guardrail works.

Works beneath the bridge were carried out without impact to the sensitive watercourse environment, due to an array of controls including encapsulation and periodic inspections by an ecologist.

Following concrete repairs, a hybrid anode system was installed in the columns and silane applied to the concrete substructure. The hybrid system was commissioned successfully in August 2017 and is performing as expected.

The guardrails were dismantled and taken offsite to be abrasive blasted and coating with a high build, abrasion-resistant polyurethane coating, before being reinstalled on site.

The guardrail colour was not finalised at time of award of contract. In June, MCM's Project Manager, Philip Bird, offered to paint the steel in rainbow colours because, as he pointed out to Council, Byron Bay is widely known as an inclusive community and the rainbow painting of the bridge would be an excellent way to demonstrate that to residents and visitors. Council agreed and on 2nd August 2017, Mayor Simon Richardson officially opened the new "Rainbow Bridge" with a ceremonial cutting of the rainbow tape.

"The colours on this bridge show Byron Shire Council's support for equality and inclusion," Mayor Richardson said.

"The new rainbow colours on the Belongil Bridge are a welcoming message to everyone and I congratulate Philip Bird and the team from Marine & Civil Maintenance who have been working under the bridge to upgrade the foundations."

Feedback from the community has been overwhelmingly positive, with Council's Facebook page receiving a great number of likes and shares, particularly during the subsequent marriage equality debate.

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