

**BACK IN BUSINESS:** Cr Margie  
Ryder, with locals John Holliday and  
Chris Martin at the Rollingstone Ck  
bridge yesterday. Picture: EVAN MORGAN



**Upgrade completed under budget after 15-month closure**

**RACHEL  
RILEY**



[rachel.riley@news.com.au](mailto:rachel.riley@news.com.au)

A ROLLINGSTONE bridge closed for more than a year over safety concerns will re-open to traffic today after an \$850,000 upgrade.

Townsville City Council closed the bridge over Rollingstone Creek in May last year after a structural inspection revealed significant white ant damage to wooden support beams.

The closure sparked outrage from locals with motorists and cyclists forced on to the Bruce Highway, and nearby businesses also claiming significant losses in revenue.

Balgol Beach resident and District Lions Club president John Holliday said the extended closure of the bridge had been a major inconvenience for both locals and visitors.

"When it was closed I think the reaction of the community caught council by surprise because there was no consultation, and that angered a lot of people," he said.

"Once they realised that the community was very strong about it they had a change of faith. Now they've done a really good job of it because it's a lot safer than what it was."

Mayor Jenny Hill said local firm Civil Plus worked on the bridge upgrade, which included replacing the deck, strengthening the southern abutment and repairing existing headstocks.

"This project was also completed for well under original estimates in excess of \$1 million, which is a great result as the council can now re-allocate unused funds to other important community projects," Cr Hill said.

The total cost of the \$850,000 project was funded equally between Townsville City Council and the Federal Government under its Bridges Renewal Program.

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Darren Chester said the upgraded bridge would save locals "time and money".

"The completion of this project recognises that, for many years, local residents

and emergency services have relied on the bridge as a safe and convenient way to cross Rollingstone Creek without having to go around via the Bruce Highway," he said.

Representing Mr Chester at yesterday's opening, Senator Ian Macdonald said upgrading local roads and bridges was critical for people living and working in regional communities.

Division 1 Councillor Margie Ryder said the project was a great outcome for locals.

"Today's opening of the bridge will be welcomed by the residents of the area and we thank them for their patience during the process," she said yesterday.

**“ They've done a really good job of it because it's a lot safer than what it was**

**JOHN HOLLIDAY**