

Years in the making, Maroochydore's missing link opens today

Finally, it's a bridge to somewhere!



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THANK God!

And also Maroochy council, Main Roads and hundreds of workers. Sunshine Coast motorists will at last be able to use the bridge to nowhere to get somewhere.

The barriers will come down, the traffic lights will fire up and the ribbon will be cut at 3pm today signalling the official opening of the most significant and long-awaited piece of local government infrastructure in Maroochy Shire.

Motorists have had a long wait. It has been five years since the council completed the bridge over the Sunshine Coast motorway but didn't have it going anywhere.

No one was more pleased than the council that this bridge could finally lose its nickname, "the bridge to nowhere".

Road services manager Ian Bilkey and general manager of infrastructure services Judy Bailey could barely contain their pride yesterday that this bridge and Maroochy Boulevard were not only completed on time and on budget, but also look impressive.

"We didn't want it just as a bridge, we wanted it to be a statement of the gateway into the Maroochy CBD," Mr Bilkey said.

"This is Maroochy's most important road linkage as it is the gateway."



PROUD AS PUNCH: General manager of infrastructure services Judy Bailey and road services manager Ian Bilkey are happy the project was finished on time and on budget.

PHOTO: WARREN LYNAM/168080

The completed 1.7 kilometre four-lane roadway will help save "at least five minutes" for commuters trying to get from the motorway directly to Sunshine Plaza and the Maroochy CBD.

Ms Bailey said it would also help ease traffic on congested Sugar Road significantly, and those wanting to get to Wisers Road would no longer have to go via the traffic lights and roundabouts from the Buderim/Mooloolaba intersection.

The boulevard is expected to service more than 25,000 journeys a day when it finally opens to traffic from 6am tomorrow. More than 30,000 shrubs coupled with ground-cover helps give the concrete structure a natural feel and the council also used an innovative combination of green and aqua-marine shade-cloth structures to add to the artistic feel.

The entire project cost about \$45 million.

WHERE TO GO TO WALK THE BRIDGE

- Open time: 3pm to 5.30pm
 - Festivities: Live broadcast from Hot 91, skydiving, roving entertainment, school's challenge, food and coffee stalls and lucky door prizes
 - Parking: Off Wisers Road
 - First traffic: Bridge open to traffic from 6am on Sunday
- BOULEVARD FACTS:**
- 1.7kms of four-lane roadway with provision for addi-

- tional bus lane
- 3.5 metre wide pedestrian/cycle way contained within landscaped verge
- Access off and on to the Sunshine Motorway between Wisers Road and Plaza Parade
- Four on and off ramps with the motorway
- Expansion of bridge over the motorway from two lanes to five