

## BREAKAWAY BRIDGE FAQs – JUNE 2023

### What has happened to date?

Breakaway Bridge in Acheron suffered significant damage resulting from the October 2022 Floods, including the loss of the northern bridge abutment and one bridge span.

The northern bank of the Goulburn River also experienced severe damage when floodwaters impacted the road, approaches to the bridge and the river banks on either side of the road.

To date, the following work has occurred:

### Breakaway Bridge

Council has:

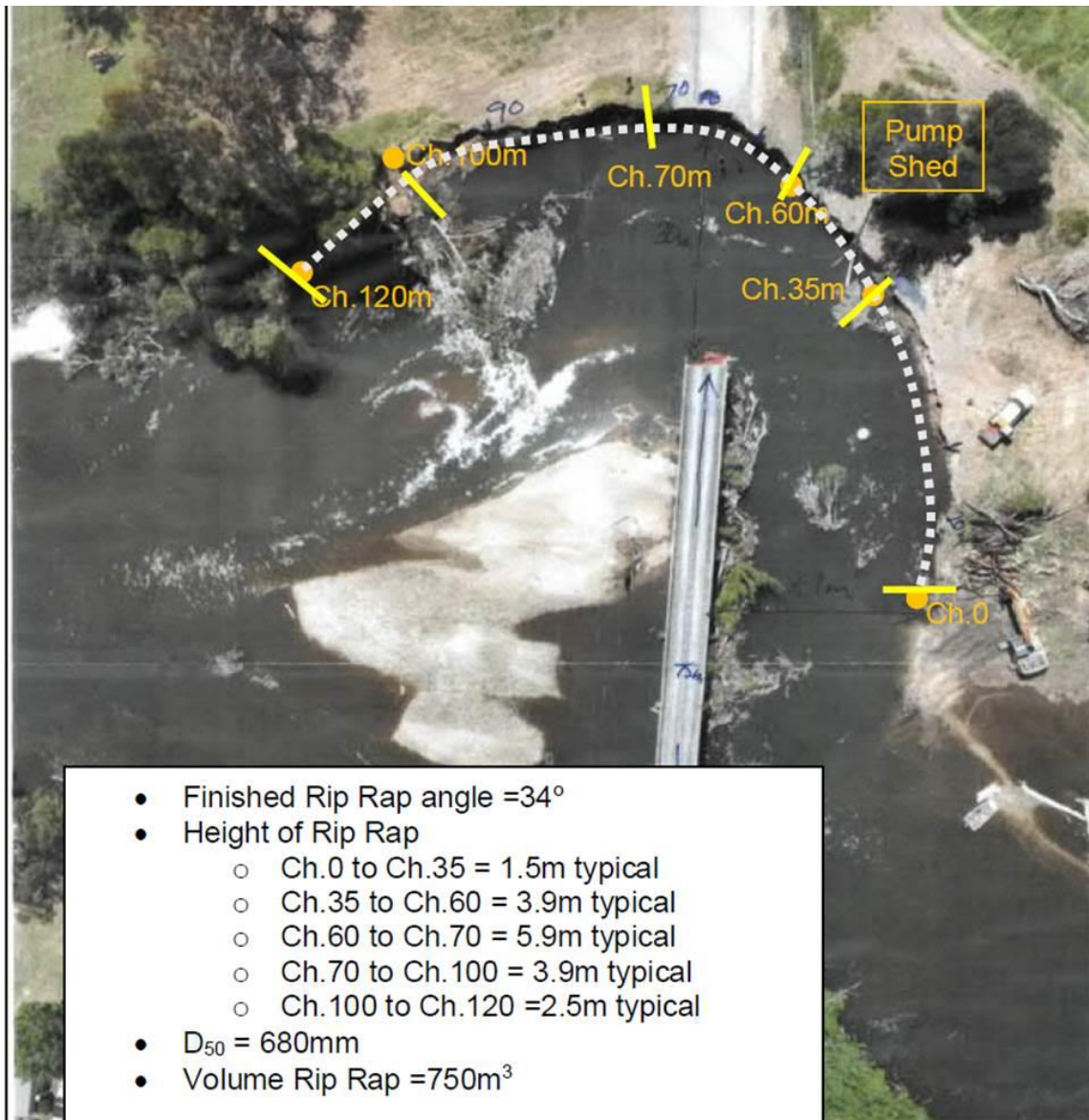
- negotiated with GMW to reduce release volumes to enable Council to engage local contractors to clear debris washed up against Breakaway Bridge
- carried out impact assessments to determine the condition of bridge. These assessments include:
  - measuring the bridge structures and testing material elements of the bridge (everything that absorbs load, e.g. support elements of the bridge and other materials like timber decking and handrails)
  - a full structural assessment of the bridge against the Australia Standard AS5100 for bridge design.



### Goulburn River Bank Stabilisation

Council has:

- engaged a specialist consultant to complete bank stabilisation design drawings and technical specification, to protect the road and bridge area, which can be used to source quotes from contractors
- commissioned and accepted the initial design proposal for road and embankment protection works that includes bank stabilisation on the northern riverbank, using a protective stone wall
- applied for and received a Works on Waterways Permit from Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) in line with the initial design proposal
- requested a second design, which results in minimal earthworks and impact to the adjacent pump shed
- delivered the first 300 tonnes of rock to the site for bank stabilisation works.



*Aerial view of bank erosion.*

## BREAKAWAY BRIDGE

### What do we know about the condition of Breakaway Bridge?

A detailed technical assessment of all bridge elements has been completed. The assessment tells us that:

- the steel frame of the bridge is in good condition
- many of the timber pier and truss elements are damaged or in poor condition
- the timber bridge deck is in poor condition
- handrails are in fair condition
- the vertical support of the bridge remains capable of supporting a 20 tonne load limit and existing materials are suitable for repair
- timber elements of the bridge would require refurbishment.



*Photo showing the timber truss and steel frame beneath Breakaway Bridge*

### **What don't we know about the condition of Breakaway Bridge?**

The horizontal strength of the bridge is yet to be determined. The horizontal strength refers to the ability of the bridge to withstand water flow on the pillars. Understanding horizontal strength will inform the overall condition of the bridge and influence the possible options for the future of the bridge.

[The GBCMA](#) is undertaking a hydraulic assessment of future river flow scenarios and associated pressure from flood water. Once we have the data from the hydraulic assessment, a technical assessment of the bridge will be undertaken to determine if the structure could sustain the horizontal pressure of water against the piers and beams.

This assessment will enable us to commence discussions with the community on possible options for the future of the bridge.

GBCMA is responding to many requests across the region from municipalities impacted by the October 2022 Floods. Council is advocating to GBCMA on behalf of Acheron residents to prioritise the Acheron hydraulic assessment, so we can understand the options and work with the community to determine the future of Breakaway Bridge.

### **What are the next steps from here?**

We will continue to engage the community at each step of the flood recovery. Once we have all the information on the condition and strength of the bridge, we will involve the community with the process of deciding on the options for the bridge. Funding will then be sought to deliver the preferred option.

Council will make the final decision considering all feedback and information from the community, in addition to technical and engineering advice and DRFA funding.

## **OTHER FAQs**

### **What are the current emergency service response arrangements?**

Emergency service response times to some areas of Acheron are affected by the bridge closure. CFA District 12 has been advised the bridge is closed for an extended period of time and a CFA tanker has been located on the north side of the bridge to hasten response times. Council is arranging a meeting with all emergency services providers to review the response plan.

### **What is happening with the debris remaining on the side of the road?**

Debris is planned to be removed once it is sufficiently dry. We are currently working with Emergency Recovery Victoria on timelines for removal, as part of the Street Debris Removal Program.

### **Are there plans for road safety upgrades planned for detour routes?**

The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) has approved a speed zone reduction on Maroondah Highway at Acheron Road. Signage is planned to be installed within the next month.

### **What action is Council taking to mitigate future flood events?**

Many community members have expressed anxiety about possible future flood events. Council has shared these concerns with the Victorian Government, which has now announced funding towards a flood mitigation assessment of Lake Eildon.

Read the media release here: [Flood assessments for Lake Eppalock and Lake Eildon](#)

Council is advocating to the Water Minister and agencies responsible for managing Lake Eildon to seek a revision of the operating rules for Lake Eildon to allow for flood mitigation. Council has requested an urgent ministerial direction to place an interim cap of 95% for Lake Eildon until the government completes the relevant modelling to establish the ongoing capacity limit for the dam levels.

Council has also made a submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the October 2022 Floods.