

UPDATED

Council gives progress update for Haughton Pipeline water security project

Work is progressing on stage two of the Haughton Pipeline, despite a massive cost blowout to the key water security project. Find out how much pipe is now underground.



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Glass reinforced polymer pipes being laid south of Townsville for stage two of the Haughton Pipeline. Picture: Supplied.

Despite a [massive cost blowout](#), work is progressing on stage two of the Haughton Pipeline project, with Townsville City Council confirming that three-quarters of the pipe had now been laid.

The completed pipeline will provide greater water security for Townsville for over 50 years, by being able to top up the Ross River Dam by pumping water from the Burdekin River during periods of very low rainfall.

When asked for a progress update on the project, a Townsville City Council spokeswoman said significant progress had been made on the construction of the pipeline following the wet season this year.

“A weather event in the first quarter of 2024 and notable rainfall in August and October prevented access to some work sites that caused construction delays,” the spokeswoman said.

“75 per cent of the pipe is in the ground. Multiple sections are left to go in the ground at creek and road crossings and through tunnels.

“The first underground micro-tunnel was recently completed at Ayr Dalbeg Road. Installation of the remaining pipes will follow completion of the remaining three micro-

tunnels and is planned to be completed in 2025.”

The council is working with several delivery partners across the site, chalking up “more than 300,000 contractor hours completed so far”.

[In July it was revealed that the project](#) was in danger of becoming a white elephant after Townsville City Council’s chief executive Joe McCabe confirmed that post-Covid inflation in the construction industry had driven up the cost by \$150 million, to \$420 million.



Joe McCabe was announced as the permanent Townsville City Council CEO.

This followed the 2021 controversy when it was revealed [that ratepayers would foot the bill for council’s agreement to cover \\$79m of the project’s cost](#).

The council spokeswoman said the current agreed funding was split between \$195 million from the Queensland Government and \$79 million from the council.

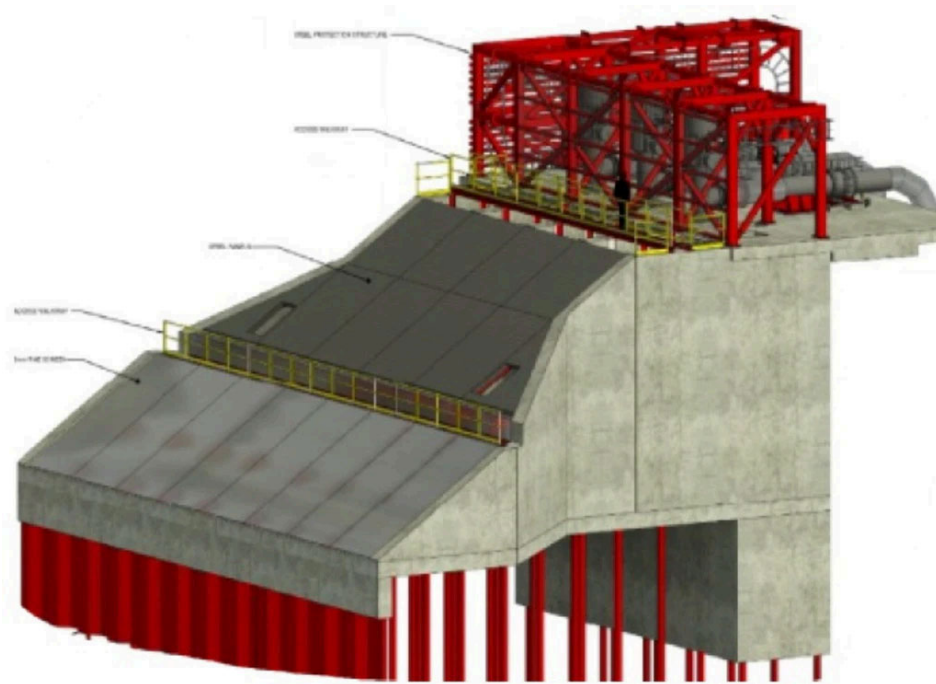
“The Houghton pipeline is a Townsville City Council project with significant funding from the Queensland Government,” she said.



Map of the Haughton Pipeline Project. Picture: Infrastructure Australia

“The council was currently working with the state government to consider the impact of the forecast cost to complete the project with the known funding constraints,” she said.

“The tender costs received for the pump station were all significantly over budget, hence the increase in the forecast cost to complete. Council is now working with state government departments to consider the impact of funding constraints.”



Concept images for the Burdekin River pump station for Haughton Pipeline Stage 2. Picture: TCC.



Concept images for the Burdekin River pump station for Houghton Pipeline Stage 2. Picture: TCC.

Recently sworn in Deputy Premier Jarrod Bleijie has assumed responsibility for the Houghton Pipeline project as the Minister for State Development, Infrastructure and Planning.

Mr Bleijie took aim at the previous Labor Government's inability to manage projects on time or on budget.

"I have received a briefing from my department, who've confirmed this project will be hundreds of millions of dollars over budget," Mr Bleijie said.

"The LNP Government has been left to fix Labor's mess and we will work closely with Townsville City Council to find a way forward.

"North Queenslanders have been waiting too long for this crucial project to be completed."