

# CASE STUDY HELPING TO REBUILD THE FITZROY RIVER BRIDGE

## FAST-TRACKING THE REBUILD OF THE FITZROY RIVER BRIDGE

For almost five decades, the single-lane Fitzroy River Bridge on the Great Northern Highway has been the only all-weather connection between WA and the NT. When the bridge was damaged beyond repair in record-breaking 2023 floods, an urgent solution was needed!

WA's road authorities in partnership with the Fitzroy Bridge Alliance decided to demolish the old structure, and build a new dual-lane, eight-span bridge in its place – one that would have greater disaster resistance and allow for more efficient movement of traffic.

Initially, the expected completion date was mid-2024. But with a concerted and collaborative effort – which included the Kennards Hire team – the bridge was in the finishing stages six months ahead of schedule. An awesome result!

## COLLAPSE FORCES DETOURS AND DELAYS

When the bridge collapsed, road users were detoured onto alternative routes, which naturally caused slow-downs. At one stage, a barge was even used to ferry light vehicles and passengers across the river. Oversize vehicles were restricted to daylight hours only – causing a lot of disruption.

All stops were pulled out to get the new structure into place. The new bridge was built by Fortec, using an incremental launching method to help speed up construction. This involved putting the piers in during the dry season, building the bridge on a launching platform, then pushing the bridge out across the piers.

As the bridge was being moved approximately 100m, Fortec needed a safe and effective way to lift and then drop the bridge into place – allowing for tight control and an even pace.

But Beau says that with recalculation and reassessment, it ended up being closer to 50, especially as Fortec had some of their own they were able to use.

The Karratha branch had to source the remainder of the rams from other Kennards Hire branches across the country. This is one of the benefits of working with Kennards Hire – even if a product isn't in stock at a local branch, it can be urgently sourced from branches nationwide.

Beau said there were initial concerns about the actual weight of the bridge, and a potential mismatch between that and the capacity of the rams. But Kennards Hire's range and fleet size allowed the team to overcompensate, and the move went ahead smoothly.

## AN EFFECTIVE SOLUTION

Beau Stone, Kennards Hire Operations Product Specialist at Karratha in WA, says using regular rams for the task would have come with potential pitfalls.

"There was a risk of the rams weeping, and the bridge dropping down at one end as it was moved into place," he says.

"We chose Lock Nut Rams for moving the bridge, so each ram could be locked into position while the bridge was suspended."

Fortec initially planned to hire around 80 rams, for a period of about six weeks.

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"The advantages to working with Kennards Hire were Beau sourcing and prepping all the equipment promptly, and Kennards Hire having an extensive range of high-tonnage jacking equipment in stock and available at short notice."

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Image credit: [www.mainroads.wa.gov.au](http://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au)



### PROVIDING A RANGE OF OTHER EQUIPMENT

Fortec needed timely access to other equipment in order to provide them with light, power and lifting capacity on-site.

Kennards Hire's Broome branch handled this. Account Manager Andrew Richardson described the project as being about as "remote as you can get" – about 380km from Broome and twice that distance to Kununurra.

But as Andrew pointed out, the branch is used to providing solutions to remote customers. In this case, the team supplied a range of products – including generators, light towers, boom lifts, concrete grinders and specialty equipment as needed.

### SUCCESSFUL TASK COMPLETION

The provision of the rams and other equipment meant that Fortec was able to complete the job safely and effectively.

A Fortec representative said Kennards Hire was also able to meet the project needs quickly.

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Beau says there has been a "knock-on effect" with Fortec requesting help for another bridge in WA.

If you'd like to know more about solutions for large-scale infrastructure projects, contact your closest Kennards Hire branch.



Image credits: [www.mainroads.wa.gov.au](http://www.mainroads.wa.gov.au)

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