

= Great Northern Highway =

Great Northern Highway links Western Australia 's capital city Perth with its northernmost port , Wyndham . With a length of almost 3 @, @ 200 kilometres (2 @, @ 000 mi) , it is the longest highway in Australia , with the majority included as part of the Perth Darwin National Highway . The highway is constructed as a sealed , predominantly two @-@ lane single carriageway , but with some single @-@ lane bridges in the Kimberley . Great Northern Highway travels through remote areas of the state , and is the only sealed road link between the Northern Territory and northern Western Australia . Economically , it provides vital access through the Wheatbelt and Mid West to the resource @-@ rich regions of the Pilbara and Kimberley . In these areas , the key industries of mining , agriculture and pastoral stations , and tourism are all dependent on the highway .

In Perth , the highway begins in Midland near Great Eastern Highway , and further north intersects the Reid and Roe highways , which together form Perth 's ring road . There are also three rural highways that spur off Great Northern Highway . Brand Highway and North West Coastal Highway provide an alternative coastal route between Muchea and Port Hedland , while Victoria Highway carries the National Highway route and interstate traffic into the Northern Territory . Various road routes are allocated to sections of Great Northern Highway , including the Highway 1 routes National Route 1 and National Highway 1 , as well as National Highway 95 .

The highway was created in 1944 from existing roads in the Wheatbelt and a series of tracks through remote pastoral areas . However , it was a hazardous route that could be dusty in the dry season , and boggy or washed away in the wet season . Some sections were effectively impassable sand , while others contained limestone outcrops . Economic growth and development in northern Western Australia prompted initial improvement efforts , and the federal government 's Beef Roads Scheme in the 1960s resulted in a noticeably higher @-@ quality road in the Kimberley . Construction of a sealed road from Perth to Wyndham , including numerous bridges to reduce the impact of seasonal flooding , took many years to complete . The last section opened on 16 December 1989 , and received national media coverage . However , by then many older sections were either worn out or not up to modern standards . Various upgrades have been carried out in small sections , across the length of the highway , with further works planned . A major realignment of the highway in Perth is scheduled for construction between 2016 and 2019 , as part of the NorthLink WA project that will also upgrade Tonkin Highway .

= = Route description = =

Great Northern Highway is the main north @-@ south route between Perth and the northern areas of Western Australia . Covering a distance of 3 @, @ 195 kilometres (1 @, @ 985 mi) , it is the longest highway in Australia . From Midland in Perth 's north @-@ east , the highway heads generally north @-@ east through the Wheatbelt and Mid West to Newman , north @-@ west to the coastal Pilbara town of Port Hedland , along the coastline to Broome , east to Halls Creek , and finally north to Wyndham , on the state 's northern coastline . Sixty kilometres (37 mi) out from Wyndham , the highway intersects the start of Victoria Highway , which carries interstate traffic to the Northern Territory via Kununurra . Various road routes are allocated to sections of Great Northern Highway , which is mostly a National Highway route , and also forms part of Australia 's Highway 1 . It is signed as National Route 1 from Midland to Middle Swan , National Highway 95 and National Route 1 concurrently from Middle Swan to Muchea , National Highway 95 from Muchea to Mundabullangana , and National Highway 1 from Mundabullangana to Victoria Highway . The vast majority of the highway is a two @-@ lane single carriageway , although as of 2014 there are thirteen single @-@ lane bridges and four single @-@ lane floodways in the Kimberley . The speed limit is 110 kilometres per hour (70 mph) except in and around built up areas .

Great Northern Highway travels to remote areas of Western Australia , including the Munjina Roadhouse near the Hamersley Ranges , and the communities of Eighty Mile Beach , Wallal , Sandfire and Mandora , which are located between Broome and Port Hedland . It is the only sealed road between the Northern Territory border and major population centres in the north of the state .

Economically , Great Northern Highway is also a vital link in the resource rich regions of the Wheatbelt , Mid West , Pilbara , and Kimberley . The key industries of mining , agriculture , and pastoral stations are all dependent on the highway as a significant and in some cases only method of transport . Tourism accounts for a significant portion of the road 's traffic , and is a growing part of or potential growth source for the regional economies . The highway provides access to a variety of tourist attractions , including New Norcia , the Yilgarn area , and various national parks , including Karijini . Parts of the highway itself are included in the tourist routes Swan Valley Tourist Drive (Tourist Drive 203) in Perth , Chittering Valley Tourist Way (Tourist Drive 359) in Bullsbrook , Midlands Tourist Way (Tourist Drive 360) from Upper Swan to Walebing , and Geikie ? Windjana Tourist Way (Tourist Drive 350) from Geikie Gorge National Park to Fitzroy Crossing .

Main Roads Western Australia monitors traffic volume across the state 's road network , including various locations along Great Northern Highway . From 2007 / 08 to 2008 / 09 , the recorded traffic volumes ranged between 7 @, @ 830 and 17 @, @ 710 vehicles per weekday in Perth , 510 to 2 @, @ 990 in the Wheatbelt , 470 to 590 in the Mid West , 390 to 10 @, @ 840 in the Pilbara , and 170 to 4 @, @ 090 in the Kimberley . The highest percentage of heavy traffic was 52 @. @ 5 % , north of Newman Drive in the Pilbara . Overall , Great Northern Highway performs favourably in terms of road safety , compared to other major highways in Western Australia . Whilst making up two thirds of the state 's National Highway network , it was the location of only half of all recorded fatalities for 2005 ? 2009 . For that period , the sections of the highway from Wubin to the Sandfire Roadhouse , north @- @ east of Port Hedland , were considered by the Australian Automobile Association to be among the lowest risk highway links in the state . However , the section from Perth to Wubin was rated as medium risk , and the northern sections of the highway were rated medium @- @ high and high risk . In 2013 , Great Northern Highway received a similar rating , still higher overall than the other highways . Out of five stars , 21 % was rated as one- or two @- @ star , and 79 % was rated three- or four @- @ star , with the southern and northern ends of the highway generally less safe than the portion from Wubin to the Sandfire Roadhouse .

= = = Perth = = =

Great Northern Highway begins at Morrison Road , Midland , in Perth 's north @- @ eastern suburbs , signed as National Route 1 . Though it originally commenced at Great Eastern Highway , that section is no longer contiguous , and is now named Old Great Northern Highway . The highway heads north through Middle Swan , intersecting the start of Toodyay Road after 1 @. @ 3 kilometres (0 @. @ 8 mi) , and then the meeting point of Reid and Roe Highways after another 1 @. @ 4 kilometres (0 @. @ 9 mi) . Those highways come together from Perth 's ring road , signed as State Route 3 , and north of this intersection Great Northern Highway is concurrently allocated National Highway 95 and National Route 1 . It continues north through the Swan Valley for 9 @. @ 5 kilometres (6 mi) , passing many wineries , restaurants , and other tourist attractions . The highway crosses the Swan River and intersects West Swan Road , before turning north @- @ east to travel around the residential part of Upper Swan . Great Northern Highway continues north for thirteen kilometres (8 mi) beyond West Swan Road , past larger agricultural properties , to reach Bullsbrook , the last urban area within the Perth Metropolitan Region . After 11 @. @ 5 kilometres (7 mi) beyond Bullsbrook , the highway reaches the edge of the Perth metropolitan area at the City of Swan ? Shire of Chittering boundary , where it passes into the Wheatbelt .

= = = Wheatbelt = = =

In the Wheatbelt , Great Northern Highway links small town sites with the surrounding rural farmland , occasionally passing by remnant patches of woodlands . From the north @- @ eastern edge of Perth , the highway travels north for three kilometres (2 mi) to Muchea , where the Brand Highway and National Route 1 branch off to the north @- @ west . Great Northern Highway and National Highway 95 continue north @- @ east for 26 kilometres (16 mi) . It passes to the west of Lake Chittering , curves east to cross the Brockman River , and then back north to Bindoon . Five

kilometres (3 mi) further north , Bindoon ? Moora Road branches off to the north @-@ west , while the highway skirts east briefly then continues north , reaching New Norcia after 46 kilometres (29 mi) . The starting point of The Midlands Road is located at Walebing , 35 kilometres (22 mi) further north ; from there , Great Northern Highway heads north @-@ east for 18 kilometres (11 mi) to Bindi Bindi , north for 17 kilometres (11 mi) to Miling , then east for 33 kilometres (21 mi) to the northern end of Northam ? Pithara Road , and shortly thereafter Pithara . From here , another 16 kilometres (10 mi) takes the road to Dalwallinu , and Wubin is 20 kilometres (12 mi) further north .

= = = Mid West = = =

As Great Northern Highway heads north @-@ east from Wubin out of the Wheatbelt , the vegetation changes to arid shrubland . In the Mid West region , the long stretches between settlements show few signs of human activity , other than the highway itself . The first such settlement is Paynes Find , 154 kilometres (96 mi) out from Wubin . At this point the highway heads north again , reaching Mount Magnet after 143 kilometres (89 mi) , and then Cue after another 80 kilometres (50 mi) . The road travels north @-@ east for 115 kilometres (71 mi) to Meekatharra , and then has a long 412 @-@ kilometre (256 mi) stretch up to the northern edge of the Mid West at the Fortescue River , near Newman Airport . Halfway along this stretch the highway passes a roadhouse at Kumarina .

= = = Pilbara = = =

Four kilometres (2 @.@ 5 mi) after crossing the Fortescue River , Great Northern Highway intersects Marble Bar Road , the highway 's original alignment . It proceeds north to Marble Bar , mostly as an unsealed road , whilst the highway deviates north @-@ west , reaching Newman after three kilometres (2 mi) . The flat landscape gives way to gentle ranges , which the highway meanders around as it heads west @-@ north @-@ west for 109 kilometres (68 mi) . It then curves around to the north , proceeding over a distance of 48 kilometres (30 mi) to Karijini Road , the entrance road to the Karijini National Park . The highway continues north for another 35 kilometres (22 mi) , travelling through the north @-@ eastern corner of the national park to Nanutarra Munjina Road . Great Northern Highway proceeds on its journey north , crossing the Yule River and its tributaries . The highway then runs parallel to the Turner River over a 220 @-@ kilometre (140 mi) distance until it reaches North West Coastal Highway . This junction is the northern terminus of the National Highway 95 , and Great Northern Highway continues north @-@ east as National Highway 1 ? part of Australia 's Highway 1 , which is signed as National Route 1 along North West Coastal Highway . The turnoff for Port Hedland is 32 kilometres (20 mi) north @-@ east of the intersection , and from there the highway heads east for 40 kilometres (25 mi) to the northern end of Marble Bar Road , and reaching Pardoo after another 72 kilometres (45 mi) . It parallels the coastline thereafter , passing into the Kimberley region shortly after the Pardoo Roadhouse .

= = = Kimberley = = =

From Pardoo , Great Northern Highway travels north @-@ east , paralleling the coastline for 455 kilometres (283 mi) , and passing Eighty Mile Beach near the Sandfire Roadhouse . The vegetation becomes denser woodlands once more as the highway heads into the Kimberley 's tropical monsoon climate . At Roebuck the highway turns east , heading inland , while Broome Roads spurs off to the west , connecting to Broome . After 145 kilometres (90 mi) , the highway crosses the Fitzroy River on Willare Bridge and reaches the turnoff for Derby , Derby Highway , in Willare . Great Northern Highway continues east for 217 kilometres (135 mi) to Fitzroy Crossing , where it crosses the Fitzroy River a second time . It continues east , curving around the southern side of the Margaret River , and reaching Tanami Road after 272 kilometres (169 mi) . The town of Halls Creek and the Duncan Road turnoff are 17 kilometres (11 mi) north @-@ east of there . From here the highway

heads north for 313 kilometres (194 mi) , past Warmun to Victoria Highway . The national highway route turns off at Victoria Highway , travelling past Kununurra to cross into the Northern Territory . Great Northern Highway , however , continues north @-@ west without a route number , passing the eastern end of Gibb River Road after eight kilometres (5 mi) , and reaching Wyndham following another 48 kilometres (30 mi) . The highway continues on for six kilometres (3 @.@ 7 mi) to reach the original townsite and the harbour , where it takes on the local names Odonnell Street , McPhee Street , and Harbour Road .

= = History = =

= = = Highway origins = = =

The name Great Northern Highway was first proposed in October 1940 by the state 's Nomenclature Advisory Committee , to describe the main route from Midland to Geraldton , Western Australia . This was following the naming of the Great Eastern and Great Southern highways . The Midland Junction Municipal Council approved the name , however at the Geraldton Municipal Council meeting , one councillor suggested that Great Midland Highway would be a better name . The reasoning was that Geraldton was in the centre of the state 's coastline , not in the north . It was explained that the highway would continue north past Geraldton , and the council voted to approve the name .

By July 1941 , the Nomenclature Advisory Committee 's proposal had expanded to three highway names for the roads in the state 's northern areas : Great Northern Highway for " the road from Midland Junction Town Hall to Wyndham , via Walebing , Pithara , Wubin , Payne 's Find , Mt . Magnet , Cue , Nannine , Meekatharra , Roy Hill , Nullagine , Marble Bar , Mulyee , De Grey , Pardoo , Wallal , Anna Plains , Le Grange , Broome , Derby , Noonkanbah , Fitzroy Crossing , Christmas Creek , Louisa Downs , Hall 's Creek and Turkey Creek " , North West Coastal Highway for " the road from Geraldton to De Grey , via Northampton , Galena , Carnarvon , Boolaganoo , Winning Pool , Giralia , Yanrey , Onslow , Peedamullah , Mardie , Karratha , Roebourne , Whim Creek , Mundabullangana and Port Hedland " , and Geraldton Highway for " the road from Walebing to Geraldton via Mingenew " . The proposal was well received by the local municipal councils and road boards .

The name Great Northern Highway was gazetted on 10 March 1944 , under section 10 of the Land Act , 1933 ? 1939 . However , the highway was mostly a series of tracks through remote pastoral areas , with the sealed road ending just past the Wheatbelt town of Miling in 1950 . Driving was difficult and hazardous all year round . The road was very dusty in the dry season , and some sections of the road were effectively impassable sand , while other sections contained limestone outcrops that damaged tyres . During the wet season , when rivers flooded , sections of road were essentially bogs , or worse still , were completely washed away .

= = = Sealing the highway = = =

= = = = Initial efforts = = = =

Economic growth and development in Western Australia 's northern regions in the 1940s prompted the state to quadruple road funding between 1946 and 1952 . Five " gangs " of workers were allocated to a 1 @,@ 600 @-@ mile (2 @,@ 600 km) length of Great Northern Highway between Meekatharra and Wyndham . However , given the vast distance the highway travelled , and destructive cyclones in the Pilbara and Gascoyne that could destroy multiple weeks worth of work , the overall improvement was relatively insignificant . Over time , though , the road was improved . New alignments were constructed , such as between Derby and Fitzroy Crossing in the late 1940s , which had originally followed the curve of the Fitzroy River , along its floodplain , and could only be

used in the dry season . The new alignment was a more direct 180 @-@ mile (290 km) section , with the first five miles (8 km) sealed , a total of 68 miles (109 km) of gravel road , and the remainder simply formed earth . Despite this low construction standard , the road remained passable except for short periods during heavy rain .

== == Beef Roads Scheme == ==

In 1961 , the federal government passed the Western Australian Grants (Beef Cattle Roads) Act 1961 , known as the Beef Roads Scheme , that encouraged road building in the Kimberley . This had followed on from an earlier federal grant scheme in 1949 for the construction of a road from Nicholson to Wyndham . The road allowed trucks to efficiently transport cattle to port , rather than the slow cattle drives that could lose stock and take weeks to complete . The 1961 Beef Roads Scheme initially included upgrading the Wyndham to Halls Creek section of Great Northern Highway as one of three projects in the region . One year later the scheme was expanded to include the Broome to Halls Creek section of the highway , and several bridge construction projects . However , the resources allocated to Great Northern Highway were needed to maintain the highway as an unsealed road in a usable condition , rather than to completely seal the roadway . In 1963 , work was completed on stabilising a 42 @-@ mile (68 km) sandy section to prevent vehicles from becoming bogged , a 29 @-@ mile (47 km) section was realigned to avoid the Fortescue River floodplain , and 25 miles (40 km) between Marble Bar and Port Hedland was also realigned to minimise the effects of wet weather .

== == Perth to Newman == ==

The projects funded by the Beef Roads Scheme resulted in a noticeably higher quality road in the Kimberley , but work still progressed on other sections of the highway . In 1970 , a single @-@ lane sealed section was completed between Perth and Meekatharra . The project was one of the first in the state to be constructed by contractors rather than by Main Roads directly . It cost \$ 9 million , two @-@ thirds of which was spent after 1959 . The next section to be upgraded and sealed was from Meekatharra to Newman , a 414 @-@ kilometre @-@ long (257 mi) project that would take four and a half years to construct . Due to the remoteness of the location , airstrips were built alongside the highway , so that workers could be flown in from Geraldton . The highway was realigned in several spots , to avoid difficult areas , improve river crossings , or give drivers a more scenic view of the surrounding area . New bridges were constructed along the route , including a reinforced concrete bridge at the Fortescue River , and a four @-@ span bridge over the Gascoyne River 's Middle Branch . By December 1978 , the sealed road reached Newman , with the project completed three months ahead of schedule , and at a cost of \$ 20 million , \$ 1 million under budget . With a 7 @-@ 4 @-@ metre @-@ wide (24 ft) seal and 2 @-@ 4 @-@ metre @-@ wide (8 ft) shoulders , the road could easily accommodate two lanes of traffic . Previously sealed sections , totalling 485 kilometres (301 mi) of the highway , were less than half that width . Premier Charles Court opened the new and improved highway on 12 December 1978 .

== == Port Hedland to Wyndham == ==

The two @-@ lane sealed road between Halls Creek and Wyndham was also completed in 1978 . It involved the construction of 21 bridges , and extensive earthworks designed to blend the road into the terrain . The section was opened on 23 July 1978 by the Minister for Transport , at a cost of over \$ 20 million . Meanwhile , work on sealing and upgrading the 476 @-@ kilometre @-@ long (296 mi) section from Port Hedland and Broome began in 1976 . With up to five contractors and four Main Roads teams working throughout the project , it was completed at an extraordinarily rapid pace . It opened in April 1981 at a cost of \$ 56 million . With the opening of this section , tourist traffic escalated . Cape Keraudren , Eighty Mile Beach , and Broome became increasingly favoured destinations , especially for residents of the Pilbara .

Work accelerated in the 1980s as part of the Australian Bicentenary Road Development program . From October 1982 , the program provided \$ 2 @. @ 5 billion to upgrade the country 's roads in the lead up to Australia 's bicentenary in 1988 . By this time , the only sections of Great Northern Highway yet to be sealed were a 275 @-@ kilometre (171 mi) stretch from Fitzroy Crossing to Halls Creek , and another 416 kilometres (258 mi) between Newman and Port Hedland . Construction of the Fitzroy Crossing to Halls Creek section began in October 1981 . The route had been surveyed in 1979 ; with the collaboration of the Western Australian Museum , Main Roads ensured it would not impact important Aboriginal heritage sites . After five years of work , including the construction of nine bridges , the widened and sealed section was completed on 7 September 1986 . At the time , this was the final section of the nationwide Highway 1 to be sealed , and there was national interest . The media captured the completion on camera , while the federal Minister for Transport , Peter Morris , together with the Western Australian Minister for the North West , Ernie Bridge , rode on the bitumen truck for the final spray . With this section completed , the Newman to Port Hedland section of Great Northern Highway was the only significant section of unsealed highway in Western Australia .

= = = Newman to Port Hedland = = =

A realignment of the highway between Newman and Port Hedland had been proposed since 1976 , which would see the road deviate to the west at Newman , and travel via Wittenoom instead of Marble Bar . In the early 1980s , eleven route corridors were investigated by Main Roads . The potential impacts on the natural environment , regional economy , tourism , and resident population were considered , with particular concern for the crossing of the Hamersley Range .

As the highway would pass through the Hamersley National Park , the Environmental Protection Authority decided in 1983 that an Environment Review and Management Program report was required for the Newman to White Springs section . Consultants prepared the report for Main Roads , which found that the key risks were erosion , visual impact , and possible damage to flora . A detailed survey was carried out , which included the use of laser and infra @-@ red measuring devices from within a helicopter , and numerous field trips to determine the final alignment and bridge sites . A comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement was then produced , and the project was approved in mid @-@ 1984 .

In early 1986 , the contract for this 12 @-@ kilometre (7 @. @ 5 mi) segment through the Munjina and Mungina East gorges was awarded . Construction of this segment involved tight control over earthworks and machinery movements , to protect the National Park ecology . The finished road was a scenic route curving down through the Munjina Gorge and out onto the Fortescue River flood plain , with cuttings and embankments blending it in with the natural environment . It was opened on 12 June 1987 by the federal Minister for Transport , Peter Morris , having cost \$ 28 @. @ 4 million .

Other portions of the Newman ? Port Hedland link were completed over the next two years , with the last part officially opened on 16 December 1989 by Bob Brown and Bob Pearce , the federal and state transport ministers . This last section of Great Northern Highway also completed the sealing of the National Highway , and the opening ceremony , held on location 212 kilometres (132 mi) south of Port Hedland , received national media coverage .

= = = Fitzroy River crossing , Willare = = =

In the late 1960s , Main Roads investigated alternative crossing points over the Fitzroy River , to replace the existing low @-@ level bridge at Yeeda . Flooding in January 1966 had demonstrated that Willare was the best site . The new route would be eight miles (13 km) longer , and required two bridges , but would result in a better quality road . When tenders were called , the river flooded again , washing away 170 feet (52 m) of the old bridge . Rather than reconstruct the low @-@ level crossing , the construction timeframe was shortened from 18 months to 38 weeks . The 1 @, @ 280 @-@ foot @-@ long (390 m) Willare Bridge and 640 @-@ foot @-@ long (200 m) Minnie River Bridge opened on 12 June 1968 , having cost almost \$ 700 @, @ 000 . While situated seven feet (2

@. @ 1 m) higher than the worst known flood level , the single @-@ lane bridges were designed to accommodate more extensive flood levels , with the water flowing over them if necessary .

By the early 1980s , it was clear that the Fitzroy River crossing was still inadequate . Seasonal flooding had closed the road several times , and damaged the embankments leading up the bridges . The crossing had been closed for twenty four days in 1982 ; while in 1983 , the most severe flooding since 1914 extensively damaged 2 @. @ 6 kilometres (1 @. @ 6 mi) of the highway , closing it for twenty @-@ five days . To alleviate the problem , two new bridges were built in 1985 , and the road was widened and raised two to three metres (6 ft 7 in to 9 ft 10 in) above the flood plain . The earthworks for the project included constructing guide banks to direct excess water to flow over floodways , which were protected with rocks . This was designed to minimise the time the road would be closed in such a scenario . The \$ 11 million upgraded crossing was opened on 19 December 1985 by the federal Minister for Transport , Peter Morris . Then , one month later , Cyclone Hector produced 70 % more water than the crossing had been designed for . Water overflowed the road all along the flood plain , not just at designated floodways , ravaging the shoulders and then destroying sections of road . Four to five kilometres (2 @. @ 5 to 3 @. @ 1 mi) of the highway was washed away , leaving the bridges isolated and disconnected . The road was closed from 27 January to 14 February 1986 , with \$ 200 @, @ 000 spent just to make the crossing passable . It was then redesigned and rebuilt at a cost of \$ 1 @. @ 9 million to make it more flood resistant .

= = = Further improvements = = =

Despite the provision of a completely sealed road , there was still much work to be done on the highway , with many older sections either worn out or not up to modern standards . Narrow sections were widened to a full seven metres (23 ft) , and repairs made to the road , shoulders , fencing , and line markings as required , with work carried out in sections and progressing along the length of the highway . Four overtaking lanes were constructed between Mount Magnet and Cue in 1991 ; and between 1991 and 1993 , there were eight contracts awarded to widen , reconstruct , and seal a combined total of more than 190 kilometres (120 mi) of the highway .

A range of projects were carried out across the length of the highway between 1996 and 2006 . By 1998 , a 157 @-@ kilometre (98 mi) section between the Sandfire Roadhouse and Victoria Highway had been improved at a cost of \$ 1 @. @ 1 million , and another 42 kilometres (26 mi) north of Meekatharra was improved for \$ 12 million in 1999 . Two bridges were constructed in the vicinity of Halls Creek in 2000 , and another four in 2004 / 05 , replacing floodways so that the highway would remain open during floods . Similarly , 100 kilometres (62 mi) north of Halls Creek , the 240 @-@ metre @-@ long (0 @. @ 15 mi) Jarlalu Bridge over the Ord River was constructed to replace a single @-@ lane floodway , and was opened in January 2003 . That same year , the bridges over the Fortescue and Gascoyne Rivers were strengthened to increase the highway 's load capacity . Modifications were made to the steep ascent of the Darling Scarp at Bindoon Hill between February 2002 and April 2003 , and Great Northern Highway was realigned to bypass the Dalwallinu town centre .

Work on Great Northern Highway has been continuous . From 2004 to 2010 , the Muchea to Wubin section was upgraded , with parts reconstructed and realigned , and traffic lights installed at the intersection with Brand Highway . In the Kimberley , five sections between Halls Creek and Victoria Highway were improved between 2008 and 2009 with regards to pavement strength , alignment , safety , and flood resistance . From 2005 to 2010 , the Perth section , through the Swan Valley , was upgraded , with the road widened , turning and overtaking lanes constructed , and street lighting improved . Construction of a realignment around Port Hedland 's Wedgefield industrial area , including a new parclo interchange at Wilson Street , began towards the end of 2012 . It was opened to traffic on 17 June 2014 , and on 23 July 2014 , Deputy Prime Minister Warren Truss , Federal Member for Durack Melissa Price , and Pilbara MLA Brendon Grylls officially opened the project . It was finalised in August . In October 2013 , construction began on a project to straighten and widen Great Northern Highway 's curves around Bindi Bindi . The project was completed and

opened to traffic on 27 February 2015 , and allowed the speed limit to be raised from 80 to 110 km / h (50 to 70 mph) . A 21 @-@ kilometre @-@ long (13 mi) section between Batty Bog Road (north of New Norcia) and Walebing was reconstructed between September 2014 and 2015 .

= = Future = =

Further upgrading is planned for Great Northern Highway at its southern end , as well as elsewhere along the highway . Planning has been completed for widening an 11 @. @ 4 @-@ kilometre (7 @. @ 1 mi) section of Fitzroy Crossing , including replacing two single @-@ lane bridges . As of 2014 , the project is awaiting federal approval , and construction is unfunded .

= = = Perth Darwin National Highway = = =

In the early 1990s , a corridor study conducted by Main Roads into the long @-@ term needs of the Perth to Darwin National Highway concluded the existing Great Northern Highway , with bypasses around rural towns and the Swan Valley , was the most suitable route for the National Highway . Planning the alignment for the southernmost section , from Reid Highway in Perth to Bindoon , was undertaken from 2003 to 2013 . It resulted in the planned alignment commencing from Tonkin Highway , bypassing the Swan Valley and Bullsbrook before reconnecting with Great Northern Highway near Brand Highway . Great Northern Highway is then followed until the Brockman River , where the planned route deviates to the east to bypass Bindoon , reconnecting with the existing Highway near Bindoon ? Moora Road .

The first stage of construction is being undertaken as part of the NorthLink WA project . Tonkin Highway 's northern section will be grade separated , and the road extended northwards past Ellenbrook to Great Northern Highway near Brand Highway . The previously planned route of the bypass , prior to 2012 , followed Lord Street , east of Whiteman Park . The project is funded by both the state and federal governments . Construction is expected to begin in 2016 , and be completed by 2019 .

= = = Muchea to Wubin Stage 2 Upgrade = = =

In late 2015 Main Roads completed a planning review for an upgrade of the highway between Muchea and Wubin . Known as Muchea to Wubin Stage 2 Upgrade , the project continues work undertaken on this section from 2000 to improve the road to National Highway standards . Several bypasses , realignments , and other improvements have been planned at or near Muchea , Bindoon , New Norcia , Walebing , Miling , Pithara , Dalwallinu , Nugadong , and Wubin . Sections near Bindi Bindi and Batty Bog , completed in 2015 , were included in the review . The highest priority works are scheduled to be completed between 2016 and 2019 . These include the New Norcia Bypass , Milling Straight section , Muchea North section (designed to link to the NorthLink WA project) , and Milling Bypass . As of November 2015 , designs are being finalised for the Walebing Curve , Dalwallinu Bypass , Nugadong , and Wubin Bypass section , while funding has not been confirmed for the Bindoon upgrades .

= = Major intersections = =