

# HISTORY ABOUT THE ROAD

## INTO BINNA BURRA SIDE OF LAMINGTON NATIONAL PARK.

Queensland. Australia.



1945 Ford V8 built for Queensland Holiday Resorts, Binna Burra

*'The road is also a symbol of our collective human drive to keep moving and persist, no matter the circumstances of disasters such as a major bushfire season and now what will most likely be a few years of living with and managing the COVID pandemic.'*

Steve Noakes, Chairperson, Binna Burra Lodge Ltd  
5 November 2020



**1919:**

Proposal for an ANZAC Memorial Road from Brisbane to Lamington National Park – advocated by the ‘Main Roads Improvement Association.’ Lahey Brothers of Canungra had promised (Pounds) 5,000 towards the Memorial Road – from Woolloongabba, Sunnybank, Loganlea, Waterford, Tamborine, Canungra, over the Darlington Range and onto the National Park at Cowling’s property (on Beechmont southern end)<sup>1</sup>

**The Brisbane Courier Mail, 26 April 1919.<sup>2</sup>**

‘... Easter visit to Beech Mountain (and the national park) via Nerang. A coach operated from there to Beechmont on Easter Saturday .... Rapid clearing of Beech Mountain which has occurred since 1902. The coach road went to the southern end of the mountain and was within reasonable walking distance of Mt Roberts in the National Park ... taken on horseback on the Monday towards Mt Roberts.

Using a siding cut overlooking Coomera Valley, they reached the foot of Mt Roberts, where, securing the horses, they climbed on foot through scrub, then open forest to the top of an open bluff overlooking Egg Rock (i.e. the site of Binna Burra Lodge). The party headed south and climbed to a high point in the scrub where there were Antarctic Beech trees (Beech Hill i.e. Tullawallal). Then they descended down the western slope of the range and along rough but level going, back to the horses, returning to beech Mountain and their hosts’ farm in the dark. ‘Ferrers’ expressed the need for a good boarding house on Beech Mountain fairly close to the Park border.’

**1920:**

Alex Chisholm (a noted Australian naturalist): ‘Mr Theodore (Premier of Queensland) asked me what I thought of the idea of having a road for vehicles through the National Park. I told him the proposal was quite distasteful. An access road to a guest-house, yes, but no vehicular road to mar the peace of the area, only walking tracks. Very well’ the Premier said, ‘we’ll forget about the road.’<sup>3</sup>

**16 December 1933: Start of the first Christmas camp at Binna Burra.**

‘The cars took guests to the foot of Mt Roberts, called the Dump, and from there we walked around the mountain on a goat’s track and our bags came by sleigh later. We wandered like goats around the track in a mountain mist, holding on to the tail of the person in front and

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<sup>1</sup> Page 75 of J. Keith Jarrott’s book, History of Lamington National Park (1990)

<sup>2</sup> From page 76 of Harry Throssell’s book (1984), ‘Where the Beech Trees Grow’

<sup>3</sup> From page 76 of Harry Throssell’s book (1984), ‘Where the Beech Trees Grow’

carrying packs on our backs. It was still very wet when we arrived. The tents were near to the entrance of the caves walk, a big tent for the dining room, a cook's tent with stove facilities and smaller tents for sleeping about four on stretchers.' Margery Pryor, Kedron.<sup>4</sup>

'... it was five hours from Brisbane even in fine weather, with the last 15 kilometres accounting for two of those hours. In wet weather, with creeks up, the trip could take at least ten hours, with the final stretch navigable only on foot.'

'For the first Christmas camp, Romeo's men improved the rough vehicle track from Beechmont, then set to work making a track round the end of the mountain to cut out the final steep climb up the hill. Even so, there was the 'missing link' – 400 metres from the end of the vehicle track through 125 metres in altitude to the beginning of the point where the human packhorses unloaded their goods at the sled Dump and Old Bill took over the last stretch.

#### **29 January 1934:**

'At the end of that camp .... The provisional directors – Romeo, Arthur, R.G. and T.R. Groom, P.L. Day and Dr E.O. Marks – collected together in the now silent canvas village to review its success ..... Romeo Lahey had already spent hundreds of pounds on road works and it would be tragic to waste that, but a road to the crest of Binna Burra would require a further (Pounds) 2,000.'<sup>5</sup>

#### **1934 – 1936:**

'Romeo Lahey tackled the road problem quickly and as early as the second meeting of directors on March 1934 was able to announce that the vehicle road from Beechmont had been extended five kilometers through the Cowlings property as far as the 'first lagoon', down the hill to the west of the lodge, at which point the new flying fox took over for carrying freight up.'<sup>6</sup>

Soon after, the Main Roads Department started improvements to the road from the Nerang-Canungra turn-off (although there was no bitumen surface until 1946).

This arrangement sufficed for a long time, but two years later in July 1936 it was felt the long flight of steps (the 'slippery slide') from the flying fox Dump was deterring guests, so the directors subscribed (Pounds) 100 to extend the road from there to the old sled Dump,

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<sup>4</sup> Page 63 of Harry Throssell's book (1984), 'Where the Beech Trees Grow'

<sup>5</sup> Page 64 of Harry Throssell's book (1984), 'Where the Beech Trees Grow'

<sup>6</sup> Page 77 of Harry Throssell's book (1984), 'Where the Beech Trees Grow'

where the walking track began. It was hoped to continue the road right up to the Lodge by Christmas that year, though that turned out to be a pipe-dream for many years.'

**South Coast Bulletin, Friday 16 November 1934**

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/133773060?searchTerm=binna%20burra%20road&searchLimits=>

**BINNA-BURRA**

Binna-Burra National Park resort is becoming very popular for tourists, and it is expected that the completion of the Back Creek tourist road will increase the popularity.

**1937:**

'The last five kilometers of the rough main road were described in 1937 as 'a trial to the majority of drivers', so it was with great relief the company learned in that year Tamborine Shire had arranged with the Main Roads Commission to construct the last section of the public road from Beechmont to the Binna Burra property, especially as the Cowlings had sold their property to a Mr Greaves, who was threatening to put a fence across the road.'<sup>7</sup>

**The Courier Mail (Brisbane) 8 September 1938**

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/38712637?searchTerm=binna%20burra%20road&searchLimits=>

**BINNA BURRA ROAD WORK**

**Last Section Soon**

The last section of the road to Binna Burra, a distance of three miles, would probably be started by the Main Roads Commission within a month, said Mr A Groom, a director«, at a general meeting of the shareholders of Queensland Holiday Resorts Ltd. last night.

The company was formed in 1934 to provide tourist facilities and accommodation in beauty spots in Queensland and to assist in preserving them in their natural state in accordance with the ideals of the National Parks Association, said the acting chairman of directors (Dr. Gifford Croll).

So far the company's operations had been confined to the establishment of the lodge at Binna Burra. For the year ended June 30 there had been a profit of £235 compared with a loss of £309 the first year. This profit had been used to meet the insistent demand for accommodation at the lodge.

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<sup>7</sup> Page 77 of Harry Throssell's book (1984), 'Where the Beech Trees Grow'

The Government had stated that the greater tourist traffic which would follow the completion of the new road would have to be accommodated. This would mean doubling the present accommodation of 44 and providing other improvements.

Mr. M. S. Herring said Binna Burra would be an ideal resort for visitors on tourist ships. With the completion of the new road this, one of the foremost beauty spots of Australia, would be easily and quickly accessible.

### **18 MILES OF TRACKS**

The directors' report, presented at the annual meeting before the general meeting, stated that 18 miles of graded tracks made large areas of National Park accessible to guests at Binna Burra. The work of the company had been subsidised on a 50 per cent basis by the Forestry Department, which had also employed forestry gangs on further construction. ' The last section of the road to Binna Burra had been gazetted and a preliminary survey made.

Directors re-elected were: — Dr. E. O. Marks, Dr. Gifford Croll, and Mr. G. D. Rankin. The other directors are Messrs. P. L. Day, A. Groom, R. G. Groom, and R. W. Lahey. Messrs. David Fell and Company were re-elected auditors.

### **The Telegraph (Brisbane) Thursday 8 September 1938**

<https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/183455919?searchTerm=binna%20burra%20road&searchLimits=>

### **BINNA BURRA BOOMS**

Plans for doubling the accommodation, now available at the Binna Burra ' Lodge, Lamington National Park, in view of the announcement 'of the completion of a main" road to the lodge itself, were announced -at a meeting of shareholders of Queensland Holiday Resorts Ltd. last night. It was stated that the company last year showed a profit- of £235 - compared with a loss of £309 on the first year of operation In 1934. This profit, representing about 5 per cent on capital invested was to be used to provide for further accommodation and to provide a septic system and electric light throughout

Mr. R. G. Groom, director, said that the Government planned to commence within one month- the building of the three miles of road which would 'link the guest house by an all-weather road to the Beechmont Highway. The. new road he added, would have a. minimum 'width of nine feet with ample room for turning, on curves and would be -taken as far as what is now known as the Binna Burra Dump, a point immediately below the guest house. In the course of time, the road would be taken right up the mountain to connect with the graded tracks in the park.

The annual report of the company stated that the Forestry Department had already built about 18 miles of graded track which made accessible some of the most beautiful scenery In Queensland. It was stated at the meeting that more capital was needed to facilitate the improvement and to keep step with the: ever increasing demand for accommodation. The directors re-elected were: Drs. E.O. Marks and Gifford Croll and Mr. G.D. Rankin. Other directors elected were Messrs. A. Groom. R.G. Groom, -P. L. Day and R.W.Lahey.

### **Before and after WW2:**

‘The final road problem was the section from the Dump to the Lodge. The company couldn’t find the few hundred pounds to build this before the war, and it became one of the major works shelved in the war years. As soon as the war was over, work was started under the supervision of resident manager Groom after at least two years of discussion with the Main Road Commission. Widening of the track to enable a bulldozer to be utilised started in late 1946 and the road to the top was completed in March 1947.’

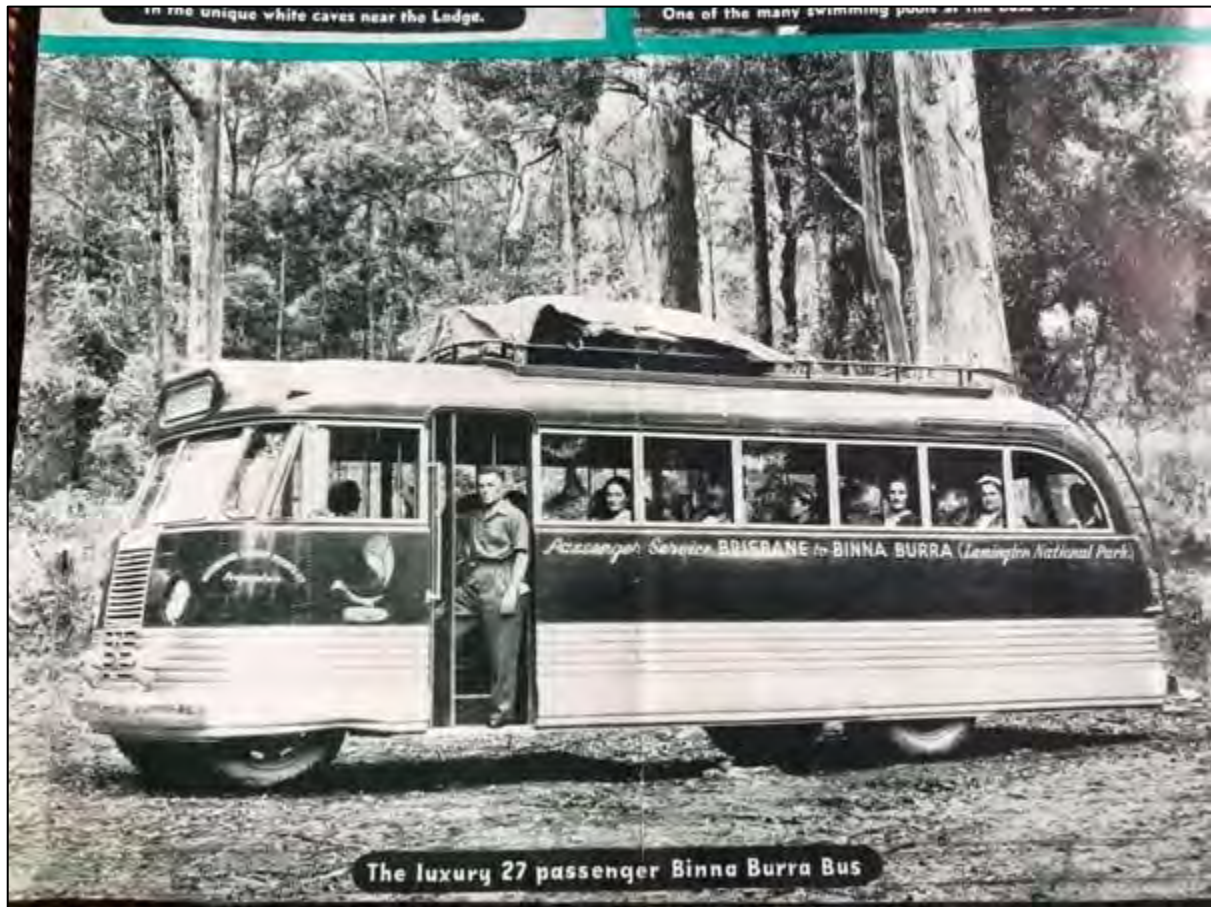
### **1951:**

The road into Binna Burra taken over by the Main Roads Commission and became all-weather.



**1969:**

The road into Binna Burra laid with bitumen.

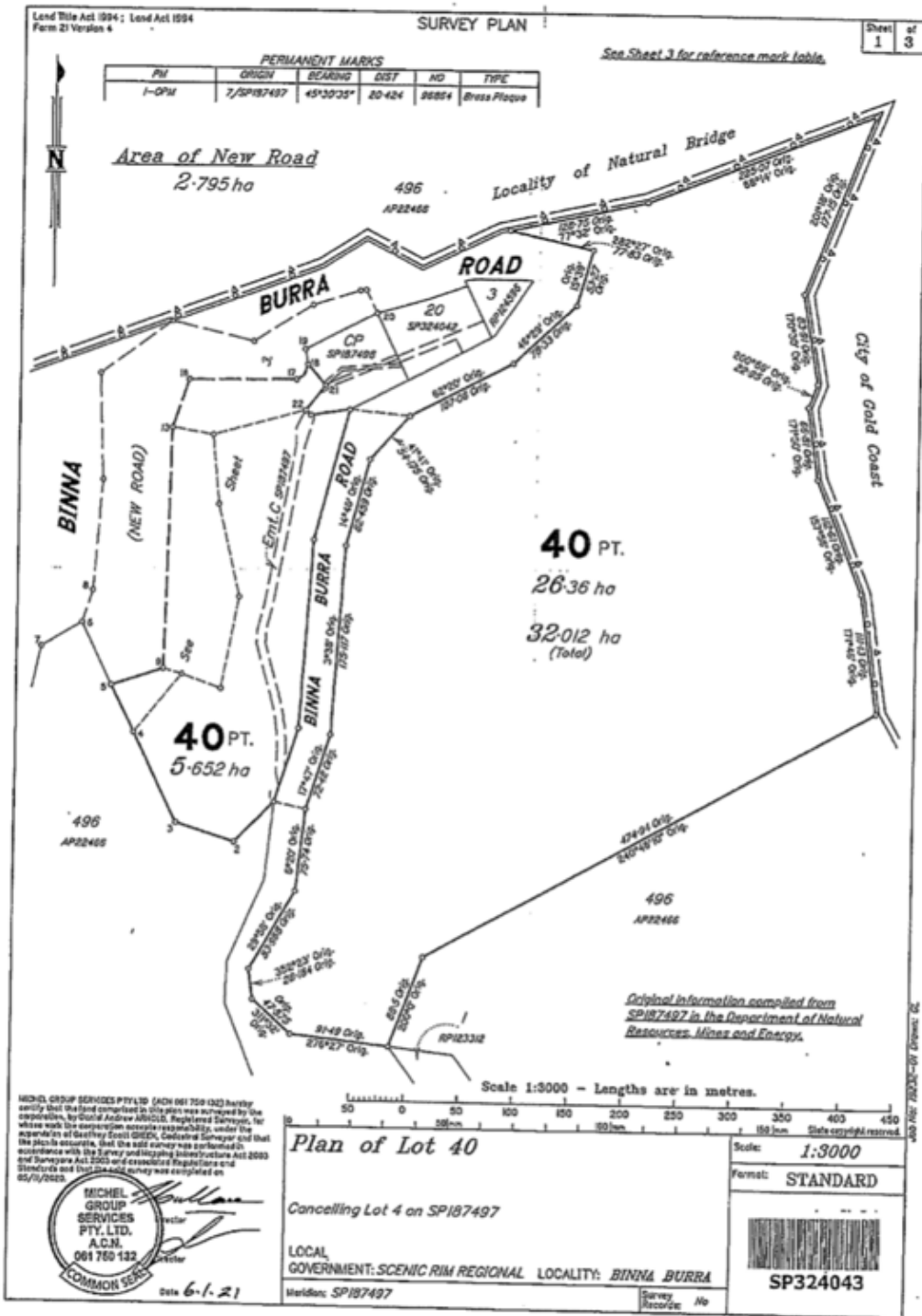


**2021:**

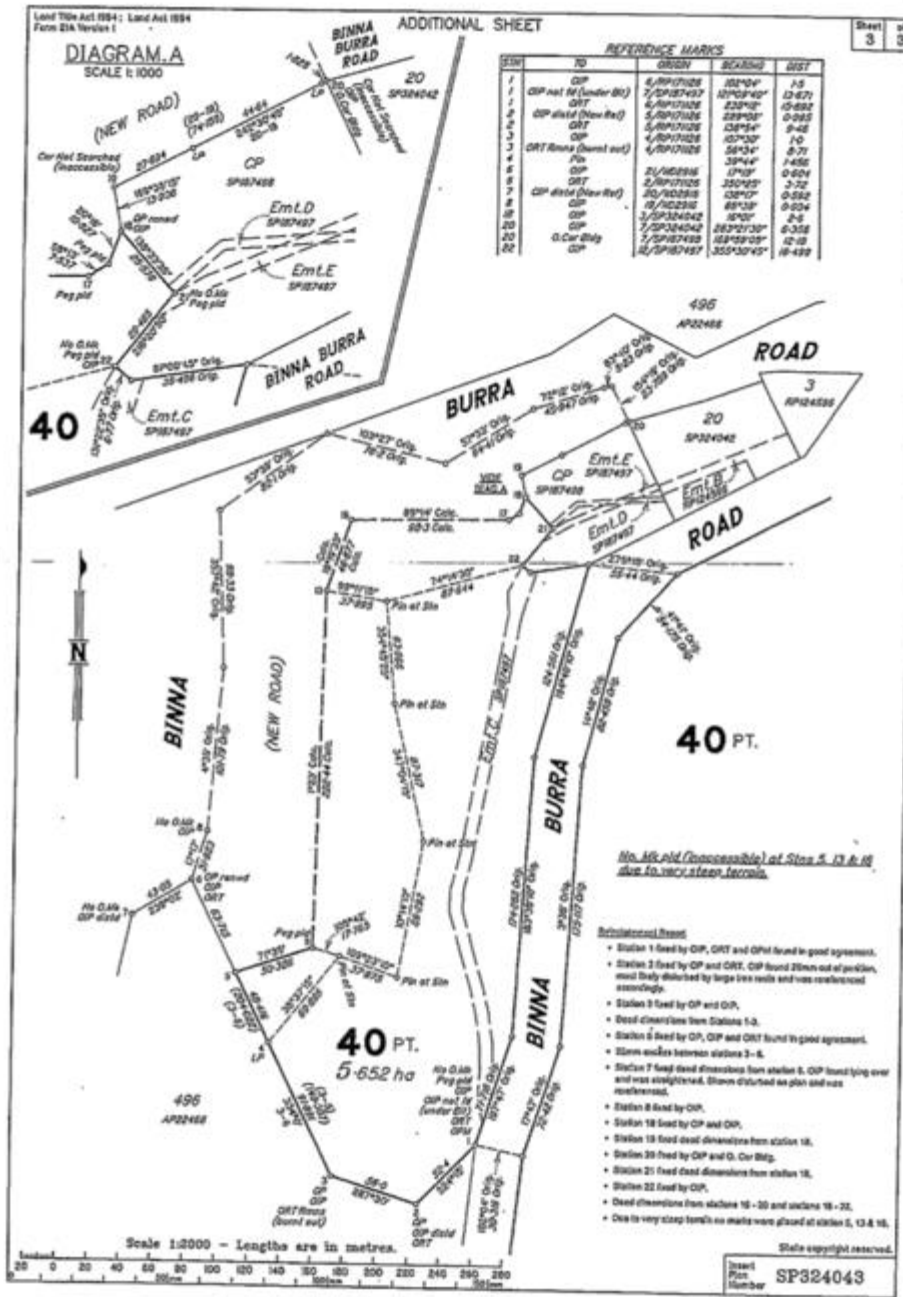
Road corridor widened when 2.795 hectares of Binna Burra land transferred to the State Government (Department of Transport and Main Road - TMR) – representing the cliff side above the single access road which collapsed after the bushfires in 2019. The cliff-side is stabilised with millions of \$ of infrastructure put in by TMR after the bushfires and is well beyond the financial and technical capacity of Binna Burra to maintain.

Road survey plan (2021) on next pages.

# ANNEXURE A – SURVEY PLAN







Land transfer from Binna Burra Lodge Ltd to the State of Queensland (2021)  
Signed on behalf of the Board of Directors by Steve Noakes and Hal Morris.

<p><b>Agreement for Transfer of Land and Dedication of Road</b></p> <p>The State of Queensland (represented by Department of Transport and Main Roads) ABN 39 407 699 291 DTMR</p> <p>Binna Burra Lodge Limited ACN 809 661 938 Landholder</p>	<p>Executed by Binna Burra Lodge Limited ACN 809 661 938 in accordance with section 127 of the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth):</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> Signature of director</p> <p><i>[Signature]</i> Signature of company secretary/director</p> <p>Full name of director <b>STEPHEN NOAKES</b></p> <p>Full name of company secretary/director <b>M. H. MORRIS</b></p>
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## MEDIA LINKS

### **BINNA BURRA ROAD REOPENING MARKS KEY RECOVERY MILESTONE**

Published Monday, 31 August, 2020

#### **JOINT STATEMENT**

**Minister for Natural Disaster and Emergency Management David Littleproud**

**Treasurer, Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Cameron Dick**

**Full statement:** <https://statements.qld.gov.au/statements/90603>

Extracts from media statement:

#### *Binna Burra Road*

Immediately following the bushfires, emergency works were undertaken to make the site safe for workers. Reconstruction between Binna Burra Lodge and the Rangers Hut commenced in late October 2019.

Pavement restoration, drainage reinstatement, sealing, asphalt, some guardrail installation and line marking are funded through the Queensland Transport Roads Investment Program (QTRIP).

Eligible reconstruction works are funded jointly by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

Federal Minister for Emergency Management David Littleproud said the road had been closed since bushfires swept across the Gold Coast hinterland in September 2019. "While the impact of the fires has been heartbreaking, the road reopening is cause for optimism.

"Significant work has been done to ensure the road is safe ... The reopening of Binna Burra Road not only supports the reopening of Binna Burra's Sky Lodges and its continued reconstruction, but also paves the way for visitors to return to Lamington National Park.

"The Australian and Queensland Governments have been proud to jointly fund this estimated \$35 million project through the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements."

Queensland Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Cameron Dick said the project to repair severe slope damage along Binna Burra Road had been complex due to the steep terrain.

"This meant works to stabilise the slopes required expert personnel trained in rope access construction and specialist geotechnical equipment to be abseiled down the cliff face," Mr Dick said.

"With the road to be reopened under traffic control on 31 August, final works are expected to continue until October 2020, weather and site conditions permitting.'

# Binna Burra Road repairs completed

by [Binna Burra Lodge](#) | Nov 5, 2020

[www.binnaburrallodge.com.au/news/binna-burra-road-repairs-completed/](http://www.binnaburrallodge.com.au/news/binna-burra-road-repairs-completed/)

*Fourteen months after the bushfires that devastated Binna Burra Lodge, the roadworks into the Binna Burra side of Lamington National Park have now been fully completed.*

‘On behalf of all those associated with or have an affection for Binna Burra, I’d like to thank the Australian and Queensland Governments for their collaborative support to ensure Binna Burra Road was rebuilt following the bushfire devastation in early September last year’ said Steve Noakes, Chair of Binna Burra Lodge.

The reconstruction works of over \$30 million were jointly funded by the Commonwealth and Queensland Governments under the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements (DRFA).

**September 2019**



**November 2020**



[Download the TMR Project Update document here](#)

The bushfires caused major damage to the single access cliff-side road.

The extent of the road damage resulted in a full year of no business activity at the site of the Binna Burra Lodge. The Sky Lodges and the campground at Binna Burra were able to resume welcoming guests in September 2020. Since that time there has been two months of ongoing roadworks requiring traffic control points on Binna Burra Road.

All that work is now completed.

For Binna Burra the road represents more than simply a transport route — it embodies almost a century of history and heritage, intergenerational stories and perseverance by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and its predecessor agencies.

‘The road is also a symbol of our collective human drive to keep moving and persist, no matter the circumstances of disasters such as a major bushfire season and now what will most likely be a few years of living with and managing the COVID pandemic’ said Noakes.

‘The remarkable engineering, construction and project management skills applied to the rebuilding of the road now makes the road itself an attraction!’

The roadworks carried out by the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads and its contractors required installing slope stabilisation above and below the road, including drape mesh and rock-fall protection above the road and installing large rock gabions (wire rock-filled cages) and anchoring these with long soil nails and rock anchors into the cliff face downslope. The work required many months of specialist personnel trained in rope access construction, specialist geotechnical equipment abseiled down the cliff face and advice from consulting experts.

Good tourism experiences are all about local story-telling and there is another fascinating story now to add about this road since when the Beaudesert Times on the 6 March 1931 reported: ‘A party of surveyors have been working for some time on the road on the southern end of Beechmont, along the route which is expected some day to be one of the approaches to the National Park’.

Roadworks were a little slower back in the 1930s. Four years later, on 22 March 1935, the Beaudesert Times noted: ‘The main road under construction from the Beechmont School to Binna Burra is nearing completion ..... it has already proved a blessing during the recent rainy weather to residents of the south end of the mountain, as the thrill of being bogged is a thing of the past.’

Like the Binna Burra Cultural Landscape, the road is important in demonstrating the evolution or pattern of Queensland’s history and provides the only access to the aesthetic significance of the mountaintop forest setting with spectacular panoramic views of one of Queensland’s significant World heritage Listed natural environments.

The Binna Burra Road reconstruction has been part of the national response to rebuilding communities affected by bushfires across large parts of Australia.

Steve Noakes said: 'Without it, we could not rebuild and fully recover the important role Binna Burra plays as the largest single job creator in our local Beech Mountain community. All current and future generations of our local community and visitors from Queensland, from around Australia and from overseas who visit this place for many decades ahead will be able to experience this road, and, as a result, the protected areas of the Lamington National Park and the services provided by Binna Burra Lodge.'

The road into the Binna Burra side of Lamington National Park has become a symbol of how destruction also brings local people and all levels of government together.

That spirit of cooperation has been essential to help affected regions such as the Scenic Rim, communities like Beechmont and Binna Burra, and individuals including our Binna Burra staff to recover after the 2019-20 Black Summer bushfires that brought destruction and loss like we have never seen before across Australia.

**End**

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Tel: 0418774295

Website for Transport & Main Roads:

[www.tmr.qld.gov.au/projects/binna-burra-road-reconstruction-works](http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/projects/binna-burra-road-reconstruction-works)

## **OTHER LINKS POST BUSHFIRE ROAD RECOVERY**

### **Binna Burra Cliff Repairs**

[www.facebook.com/watch/?v=368096527498331](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=368096527498331)

JUNE 19 2020

**Binna Burra road repairs to provide public access by August 2020**

[www.beauleserttimes.com.au/story/6799223/binna-burra-road-access-on-track/?cs=2412](http://www.beauleserttimes.com.au/story/6799223/binna-burra-road-access-on-track/?cs=2412)

Channel Nine news 01 Sept 2020

<https://www.facebook.com/9NewsGoldCoast/videos/730133571049205>

Channel 7 news 01 Sept 2020

[www.facebook.com/7NEWSGoldCoast/videos/736495243583838/](https://www.facebook.com/7NEWSGoldCoast/videos/736495243583838/)

ABC Brisbane radio. Starts 18 minutes 57 secs

[www.abc.net.au/radio/brisbane/programs/mornings/mornings/12595544](http://www.abc.net.au/radio/brisbane/programs/mornings/mornings/12595544)

**Binna Burra opens doors to guests for the first time since bushfire destruction**

[www.beaodeserttimes.com.au/story/6889733/binna-burra-reopens-after-fire-devastation/?cs=2411](http://www.beaodeserttimes.com.au/story/6889733/binna-burra-reopens-after-fire-devastation/?cs=2411)

**Binna Burra Lodge reopens a year on from devastating bushfires**

<http://www.mygc.com.au/binna-burra-lodge-reopens-a-year-on-from-devastating-bushfires/>