



**ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW
COMMITTEE REPORT
2019**

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared to provide information and advice to Council, summarising the findings and recommendations of the Road Management Plan Review Committee and for Council to note and adopt the results of this review undertaken of its Road Management Plan 2017 (Version 5). (RMP5(2017))

2. RATIONALE

The purpose of the *Road Management Act 2004* is to reform the law in relation to road management in Victoria. It establishes principles relating to the management of roads by Road Authorities and sets out the rights and duties of road users. The Act imposes several specific obligations on Council as a “Road Authority”. Council is required to establish appropriate asset management practices for its asset portfolio and needs to define and apply targets for asset maintenance. These include:

- Establishing appropriate and affordable condition standards;
- Identifying and assessing needs and setting priorities; and
- Allocating public money to meet those needs and priorities.

These standards and targets may be included in a Road Management Plan and the plan may be used as evidence of the reasonableness of a road authority’s position. The intention of the plan is to communicate with the community on Council’s responsibility for the management, maintenance and repair of the assets forming the road network, footpath & trail network and related infrastructure.

The existing Road Management Plan 2017 (Version 5) was adopted by Council on 12 April 2017 (R121/17). Section 54 of the *Road Management Act 2004* and Part 3 of the *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016* require Council to conduct regular reviews of its Road Management Plan. The current review was completed on 24 July 2019.

The purpose of this review includes: updating the plan to meet current organisational resources; redefining and clarifying Councils’ obligations under the Act; and undertaking an analysis of road inspection frequencies, maintenance intervention levels and response times.

Changes to the plan have been proposed to allow for greater consistency with similar sized Councils, and reviews of intervention response times to allow for greater compliance relative to available resources.

3. REVIEW COMMITTEE

Council’s Risk and Compliance team facilitated a Road Management Plan Review Committee with the express aim of providing all relevant internal stakeholders with the opportunity to discuss and review the RMP5(2017). The Committee first met on 9 May 2018 and quarterly thereafter.

Committee:

Terry Demeo	Director Infrastructure and Environment
Vaughn Notting	Executive Manager Infrastructure
Steve Van Orsouw	Executive Manager Operations and Environment
Luke Ives	Coordinator Road Maintenance
Darren Whitford	Coordinator Risk and Compliance

Brooke Slater	Risk and Insurance Administration Officer
Mathew Morton	Coordinator Asset Management
Matthew Clark	Supervisor Asset Surveillance
Daryl Wallis	Coordinator Parks and Gardens
Ben Ryan	Arborist
Mitch Kemp	Supervisor Arboriculture
Peter Brown	Team Leader Pathways and Drainage
Danny Joyce	Road Maintenance Scheduler
Brodie Cookson	Road Maintenance Customer Service Inspector

4. SUMMARY

In accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004* (the Act) and the *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016*, Council must conduct a review of its Road Management Plan within 6 months of a general election. A review can however be conducted at any time and amendments made to the plan in accordance with the regulations.

The Road Management Plan Review Committee (RMPRC) was formulated for this purpose in September 2016 with a view to collaboratively review the current Road Management Plan and subsequent iterations, with all internal stakeholders represented. Meetings have been held on a quarterly basis with agendas and minutes recorded.

The wording and content of the current RMP5 (2017) were reviewed to ensure relevancy, clarity and legal requirements under the Act.

Inspection frequencies and intervention time frames were reviewed in accordance with current resources and then compared with Councils of a similar size including the City of Greater Bendigo, Warrnambool City Council and The City of Greater Geelong.

The Victorian Auditor General's Office (Local Government Insurance Risks July 2018) refers to the Road Management Plan as "the key document (Council) uses to reduce its Public Liability risk arising from its roads and footpaths—the most common cause of Public Liability claims for most councils."

Since the adoption of RMP (V5) 2017, there has been significant increase in Council's compliance with the Road Management Plan. Regular compliance meetings have identified some areas of the plan which require revision in order to further increase compliance levels. Non – compliance with the plan represents a significant risk to Council's ability to rely on statutory defences contained within the Act to public liability claims associated with the road and footpath network.

In total there are 25 recommended changes which include 17 minor administrative changes and 8 major changes to standards applied.

5. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In accordance with the requirements of Part 3 of the *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016*, a public consultation process will be undertaken for a period of 28 days to seek public feedback on the content of the proposed Road Management Plan 2019 (Version 6)

Notices will be placed in the Government Gazette and The Ballarat Times Newspaper on Thursday 1 August 2019 advising the general public of the review and where the proposed plan can be viewed.

Public submissions will be recorded and considered by the Review Committee.

6. PROCESS

Compliance

The RMP 2019 (Version 6) was examined to determine compliance with the legislative requirements under:

- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016*
- Code of Practice for Road Management Plans September 2004

Risk Management Principles

The standards, processes and systems contained within the RMP 2019 (Version 6) were assessed utilising a risk based approach in accordance with AS/NZS ISO 31000:2018 Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines and Council’s Risk Management Framework and policy.

Accessibility

The RMP is a publicly accessible document that needs to be easily understood by internal stakeholders and the wider community alike. Stakeholders/ Community may be unfamiliar with relevant legislation and/or risk management practices. Examination was conducted on clarity of text, tables and other information contained within the RMP(6) to determine its suitability.

Comparison

An important aspect of the review process is to ensure that Council’s existing inspection and maintenance standards are reasonable and achievable. Council sets these standards based on available resources, both human and financial. A comparison of standards was made against similar sized Council’s including:

- City of Greater Bendigo, Road Management Plan 2017 (Version 3)
- City of Greater Geelong, Road Management Plan 2018 (Version 7)
- Warrnambool City Council, Road Management Plan 2017 (Version 5)

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	RMPRC COMMENT	IMPACT ON RMP
1.The inclusion of the wording “within a road reserve” when referencing formed or unformed roads to which the RMP is applicable.	To provide greater clarity to the reader as to which roads the RMP is applicable.	Minor - administrative
2. The inclusion of the wording “The condition of” when referencing the applicability of the RMP to bluestone guttering.	To clarify that defects within the bluestone guttering will be recorded as condition defects and are a part of the capital maintenance program and that intervention response times do not apply.	Minor - administrative
3.The inclusion of the wording “Any property owner wishing to alter a nature strip must first obtain Council approval”.	To provide greater clarity to the reader when referencing nature strips and landscaping.	Minor - administrative

RECOMMENDATION	RMPCR COMMENT	IMPACT ON RMP
4.The deletion of the wording “Based on what has been identified, the appropriate action is taken”	Unnecessary wording in relation to inspections.	Minor – Administrative
5. The deletion of “Maintenance work is programmed in accordance with the Service Level Agreement”.	The Service Level Agreements are a separate document with reference removed to provide clarity to the reader.	Minor - Administrative
6.Change Reactive inspection times from 1 day to 3 working days.	100% Compliance with 1 day inspections after notification has been difficult to achieve due to the number of avenues available for reporting, RDOs for staff, Public Holidays and the time taken for reports to filter to the correct officer for inspection. Geelong do not list a time frame and Bendigo have 15 days. The Committee has established that 3 days is more realistic taking into account available resourcing.	Major - Standard variation
7.The insertion of the word “occurring” in relation to an incident.	Improved grammar.	Minor - Administrative
8.Update of applicable Australian Standards	Standards required updating	Minor - Administrative
9.Change “road segment number” to “relevant asset number”	Inspections and jobs may be logged on road segment or road surface asset.	Minor - Administrative
10.Inclusion of “Quarterly compliance review meetings held”	As recommended by VAGO during the Risk and Insurance audit 2018.	Minor - Administrative
11.Deletion of “and Assets” from Officer title	Change in Officer title	Minor - Administrative
12. Change “update of the” to “updating the”.	Improved grammar	Minor – Administrative
13.Inclusion of wording “due to resourcing or risk issues” regarding changes to the RMP.	To provide greater clarity to the reader	Minor - Administrative
14. Change of “path” to “paths” and inclusion of “road” when describing road segment.	To provide greater clarity to the reader.	Minor - Administrative
15.The deletion of “nature strips in urban areas” when describing the footpath and shared track hierarchy.	Nature strips are not included in the hierarchy.	Minor - Administrative

RECOMMENDATION	RMPRC COMMENT	IMPACT ON RMP
17. Change in inspection frequency for Lake Wendouree and Victoria Park from 2 inspections every 6 months to 1 inspection every 4 months.	Given the level of Council activity already occurring at these sites it was determined that a slightly lower inspection frequency would free up resources to enable an increase in inspection frequencies for other assets. Council officers working in these sites report issues regularly and the number of defects reported are relatively low.	Major – Standard variation
18. Change in inspection frequency on high use footpaths from 1 inspection every 4 months to 1 inspection every 6 months.	This is in line with similar Councils and frees up resources to allow greater inspection frequency for medium use footpaths – a significant risk mitigation strategy.	Major – Standard variation
19. Change in inspection frequency for medium use footpaths from 1 every 2 years to 1 per year.	Medium use footpaths present the majority of PL claims received by Council and more frequent inspections is a significant risk mitigation strategy. Decreasing the inspection frequencies slightly for Lake Wendouree, Vic Park and High Use footpaths frees up resources for this to occur.	Major – Standard variation
20. The inclusion of “Vegetation intruding within an envelope over traffic lane within 5m height clearance on High vehicle routes”	Applicable only to the Over Dimensional Route map on the Vic Roads website. Very limited resources required.	Major – Standard variation
21. The deletion of “bluestone gutter- step >100mm or missing bluestone” as a defect	Compliance with this defect has proven to be extremely difficult due to the scope of works required, heritage issues, tree roots etc. No comparable Road Management Plans include bluestone gutter defects. The City of Melbourne includes bluestone defects but does not include a rectification response time, only what constitutes a defect. These are allocated under capital works. The bluestone guttering is not strictly designed as a trafficable surface although in reality this does occur. Assessments of high risk areas ie In front of Pharmacies with on street parking etc have led to additional pedestrian bridges being installed. Bluestone guttering will be inspected under the 4 yearly condition inspection with capital works allocated as required.	Major – Standard variation

RECOMMENDATION	RMPRC COMMENT	IMPACT ON RMP
22.The separation of concrete and asphalt footpaths in relation to the 25mm step defect.	Defects between a concrete path and asphalt path vary greatly with the asphalt path generally developing a deformation rather than a step. The rectification works also vary considerably and it was determined that a longer time frame was required for asphalt paths.	Major – Standard variation
23. Set rectification times for asphalt footpaths at 1 month	Due to the nature of the rectification work which may include tree root pruning and asphalt patching	Major – Standard variation
24.The inclusion of wording “For defects which are determined to pose a significant risk to the safety of the public and which” in reference to Response time extension.	For greater clarity for the reader	Minor - Administrative
25. Replace “Warnings” with “Actions”	For greater clarity for the reader	Minor - Administrative

8. CONCLUSIONS

The above recommendations will result in a significant improvement to Council's compliance with it's obligations under the *Road Management Act 2004* and allow for greater clarity for stakeholders.