

## ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN REVIEW 2025

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Report Author: Manager Infrastructure Services  
Responsible Officer: Director Built Environment & Infrastructure  
Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

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*The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.*

### CONFIDENTIALITY

This item is to be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

### SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the community engagement for the draft Road Management Plan 2025 pursuant to Section 54(5) of the Road Management Act 2004.

Eight submissions were received during the consultation period, reflecting the following key themes:

- Footpaths and Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Unsealed Roads: Maintenance, Potholes, and Dust Suppression
- Road Sealing and Affordability
- Contractor Performance and Repair Quality
- Car Park and Crossover Maintenance
- Department of Transport Planning infrastructure (formerly VicRoads)

(DTP are roads outside council responsibilities)

Only 2 submissions related specifically to the Road Management Plan (RMP) service standards. These are defect repair timeframes on unsealed roads (i.e. potholes) and frequency of night-time inspections. The proposed service standards in the draft RMP are considered to be appropriate to manage risk related to these two areas.

Therefore, no changes have been made to the Road Management Plan 2025 following the review.

The final draft Road Management Plan is presented in this report.

## RECOMMENDATION

### *That Council*

- 1. Note that the review of the Road Management Plan (RMP) has been completed in accordance with the Road Management (General) Regulations 2016.**
- 2. Note the public submissions, feedback and Officer responses.**
- 3. Endorse the Road Management Plan 2025, pursuant to the Road Management Act 2004, Section 54(6) and Road Management (General) Regulations 2016 (Regulation 11).**

## RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

- Council Meeting 26 August 2025 – Council endorsed the commencement of Community Engagement for the Draft Road Management Plan 2025.
- Council Meeting 23 November 2021 – Council endorsed the Road Management Plan 2021.
- Council Meeting 23 January 2018 – Council endorsed the Road Management Plan 2017.

## DISCUSSION

### *Purpose and Background*

Yarra Ranges is serviced by an extensive network of sealed and unsealed roads and associated infrastructure. The vast size of the municipality, along with increasing intensity and severity of storm events and community expectations poses challenges in inspection and repair of defects within effective timeframes.

The *Road Management Act 2004* was introduced with a primary objective “... to establish a coordinated management system that will promote safe and efficient road networks...”

The Road Management Act 2004 requires a road authority to conduct a review of its Road Management Plan at prescribed intervals. A review of the Road Management Plan 2021 has been completed in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004 and Road Management (General) Regulations 2016.

A Road Management Plan is an essential document to communicate how Yarra Ranges Council will effectively discharge its responsibilities for asset management and risks associated with road asset inspection, maintenance and repair. Council also provides a register of public roads within the municipality, as required by the Act. This register lists every road within the municipality that Yarra Ranges Council is responsible for maintaining and is available on Council’s website.

The consultation process is a key step in obtaining community feedback and ensuring there is a voice for those who wish to contribute thoughts and opinions to the RMP. This is evident in the legislated Gazette process and also the extensive staff-led consultation opportunities to connect with the community.

### ***Options considered***

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Insurance Road Management Plan Template 2025 provides a structured and legally defensible framework to support Victorian councils in meeting their obligations under the Road Management Act 2004. The template is designed to reduce liability exposure by promoting clear, consistent, and reasonable standards for the inspection, maintenance, and repair of municipal road assets.

Separate benchmarks are provided for metropolitan and regional councils to reflect differing operational contexts and risk. The Metro (Urban) template is designed for councils with higher population density, traffic volumes, and resources, requiring more frequent inspections and faster response times. The Rural template accommodates larger geographic areas, lower traffic volumes, and limited resources, allowing for more flexible standards while still maintaining legal defensibility.

### ***Recommended option and justification***

The review and update of the Road Management Plan 2025 and advent of the MAV development of a standardised template has highlighted opportunities to improve a key risk management document to ensure it provides greater transparency to the community, clarity to staff to implement, and more efficient and responsive delivery of a high priority service.

A revision of the Road Management Plan 2021 is based on outcomes of an internal audit of the existing Plan that was deemed to be an adequate and appropriate road management framework and the MAV Rural Template that aims to align Council's Road management practices with sector benchmarks and legal standards has now been completed incorporating the findings and recommendations of the review.

A review of financial data and insurance claims indicates that a moderate increase in service levels would be the most cost-effective path to minimise financial risk while improving safety.

It is recommended that Council support review process for the Draft Road Management Plan 2025 pursuant to the requirements of the *Road Management Act* and associated Regulations, leading to consideration for adoption by Council of an amended Road Management Plan.

## **FINANCIAL ANALYSIS**

The Draft Road Management Plan 2025 will deliver relevant services within Council's existing budget allocations process. The proposed Levels of Service (inspection and maintenance) have been based on what Council is able to achieve within existing

budgetary constraints and priorities. A slight increase in operational budget will be requested during the budget process to cover the increase to service recommended in the updated Road Management Plan 2025.

## **APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES**

The Road Management Plan responds to the requirements of the Road Management Act 2004 and conveys Council's commitment to the community in relation to the inspection, repair and maintenance of road and road related infrastructure.

## **RELEVANT LAW**

In addition to the *Road Management Act 2004*, the Plan also considers the following Acts, regulations and codes of practice:

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Ministerial Codes of Practice*
- *Road Management (General) Regulations 2016,*
- *Road Management (Works and Infrastructure) Regulations 2015*
- *Road Safety Act 1986*
- *Wrongs Act 1958*

## **SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Economic Implications***

The economic impacts of the Road Management Plan relate most strongly to consequences of improving safety and reducing insurance claims, and setting minimum levels of service for the inspection, maintenance and repair of the roads Council is responsible for.

Tourism growth in the Yarra Ranges continues to place increasing pressure on local road infrastructure, particularly in high-traffic scenic and recreational areas. To ensure safe and reliable access for both visitors and residents, Council will strengthen its road asset management approach by identifying tourism-intensive routes, applying minimum service standards to these priority township corridors, and engaging proactively to forecast seasonal demand and align maintenance schedules accordingly. This targeted strategy will support economic development while preserving road quality and safety.

## ***Social Implications***

The increases to service outlined within the Draft Road Management Plan 2025 has a focus on community safety. The objective of the Road Management Plan is to support the delivery of a safe and efficient road network.

## ***Environmental Implications***

Climate change is accelerating road degradation through increased rainfall and extreme heat. The Road Management Plan (RMP) addresses this challenge by prioritising proactive inspections and timely maintenance to prevent costly rehabilitation.

To enhance road resilience and safety, Council will continue to strengthen road asset management by integrating asset condition assessments and defect reporting into inspection regimes and investing in predictive maintenance strategies to reduce long-term costs and improve service levels.

The RMP also acknowledges exceptional circumstances - such as floods, fires, and storms that may necessitate suspension or adjustment of inspection and maintenance schedules.

Implications for the RMP:

- Embed proactive planning for climate-related damage into asset management strategies.
- Expand the use of predictive maintenance and condition-based inspections to improve safety and cost-efficiency.

Integrate climate resilience measures such as improved drainage and surface treatments—especially for unsealed roads.

## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

As part of the formal Gazette Process, a notification of proposed amendments to the Road Management Plan was published and 28 days allowed to comment as detailed in The Road Management (General) Regulations 2016 (Regulation 10). The Draft Road Management Plan review consultation process includes:

- The publication of a notice to review and amend in the Victorian Government Gazette August 2025,
- Advertised in the weekly publication of the Star Mail online and in six printed editions,
- Printed copies of the Draft Road Management Plan were made available at all Community Link locations,
- A Council staff member was available on the following dates/times for in person discussion:

Monbulk - Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 9:30am to 1:30pm

Healesville – Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 10:00am to 2:00pm  
Upwey – Monday 15<sup>th</sup> September 9:30am to 1:30pm  
Yarra Junction – Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 10:00am to 2:00pm

- A Shaping Yarra Ranges page was established to provide further information and enable collection of public submissions, and
- A notice was published on the Council Facebook page on 27 August 2025 and closed 24 September 2025, which was viewed 24,834 times.

***What we heard:***

A total of eight submission was received. Seven submissions were made via the Shaping Yarra Ranges page, and one submission was emailed direct to Council Officers.

The level feedback on a legislative document such as the Road Management Plan is typically low due to minimal opportunity for feedback to influence direct change to the documents. However, service request and procedural matters will be referred to the appropriate operational process.

The RMP shaping page had 593 visitors and downloaded a total of 219 times.

Only two of which related to the Road Management Plan (refer Attachment 2)

A summary of overall themes associated with the feedback are as follows:

Footpaths and Pedestrian Infrastructure

- Requests for new footpaths in Ayres Rd, Kia Ora Ave (Upwey), and Glenfern Valley Bushlands.
- Concerns about poor walkability, especially in Ferny Creek.

*Response: Footpath requests in Ayres Rd, Kia Ora Ave, and Glenfern Valley Bushlands have been logged for investigation. Ferny Creek's walkability concerns are acknowledged and will inform future planning.*

Unsealed Roads: Maintenance, Potholes, and Dust Suppression - RMP related

- Frustration with pothole repairs overlapping grading schedules.
- Positive feedback on inspections and emergency response.
- Concerns about dust suppressant consistency and effectiveness.

*Response: Pothole repair timing concerns are noted; inspections occur within 10 days and repairs are programmed accordingly. Positive feedback on emergency response is appreciated. Dust suppressant product trials have led to improved consistency, with Masterdust selected for 2025.*

### Road Sealing and Affordability

- Support for sealing but concerns about cost and red tape.
- Suggestions to align sealing with grading, allow resident contributions, and explore subsidies for high-use roads.

*Response: Suggestions to streamline sealing processes and reduce costs are noted. Coordination with grading schedules and resident contributions will be considered in future planning.*

### Contractor Performance and Repair Quality

- Cold mix asphalt used for temporary pothole repairs deteriorates quickly.
- Need for improved contractor quality control and accountability.
- Poor grading near drains causes water runoff blockages.

*Response: Cold mix asphalt is used for urgent repairs; permanent repairs are scheduled when resources allow. Contractor performance is monitored under service contracts, and recent grading improvements will inform future contract requirements.*

### Inspection Frequencies and Nighttime Safety – RMP related

- Adoption of MAV Rural Template praised for recognising rural-urban differences.
- Concerns raised over 4-year nighttime inspection cycle and safety risks.

*Response: Night inspections follow MAV standards and legal advice. Reactive inspections address emerging issues, and visibility concerns are reported to SP AusNet or addressed through maintenance. The Inspection of streetlights is to be investigated as a separate service provider infrastructure matter.*

### Speed Limits

- A general request to restore or raise speed limits to reduce fatigue and travel time.

*Response: Request to review speed limits noted; specific locations are needed to investigate further.*

### Car Park and Crossover Maintenance

- Specific request for repairs to the Upwey Shops car park entrance.

*Response: Inspection requests have been logged for the Upwey Shops car park entrance and crossover.*

### Department of Transport Planning infrastructure (formerly VicRoads)

- Complaints raised about Maroondah and Melba Highways (Department of Transport roads).

*Response: Concerns about Maroondah and Melba Highways have been referred to the Department of Transport for action.*

### Summary:

Only two submissions directly addressed the service standards outlined in the Draft Road Management Plan—specifically, the defect repair timeframes for potholes on unsealed roads and the frequency of nighttime inspections.

After careful consideration, the proposed service levels were deemed appropriate to manage risk and maintain safety in these areas. As a result, no changes have been made to the draft Road Management Plan 2025, which has now been finalised following the review process.

## **COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Internal consultation from the audit of the Road Management Plan and benchmarking of other Council Road Management Plans was referenced for the review. A legal review of the Draft Road Management Plan was completed by Special Counsel, at Russell Kennedy. The review did not identify any legal concerns.

## **RISK ASSESSMENT**

A risk-based approach has been utilised to assess the possible impacts of changes to levels of inspection and maintenance regimes as part of the review and subsequent revision of the Road Management Plan

## **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.



## **ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT**

1. Draft Road Management Plan 2025
2. Draft Road Management Plan Feedback Log