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## 5 DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

### 5.1 ROAD MANAGEMENT PLAN

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**File No:** RMP 2017

**Attachments:** 1. *Summary of Submissions to the Draft Road Management Plan 2017*

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#### SUMMARY

Mitchell Shire Council is the responsible road authority for the management of Council's local road and drainage network. This local road network is Council's largest asset category and comprises over 1383 kms of sealed and unsealed roads. The Mitchell Shire Road Management Plan (RMP) is a management system for the road management functions of Council which is based on Council's policy and operational objectives as well as available resources. It sets the relevant standards in relation to the discharge of duties in the performance of those road management functions.

The RMP sets out Council's obligations as the responsible authority to inspect, maintain and repair public roads. In simple terms, its purpose is to set out a clear management system for inspection and maintenance of the road and footpath network.

Council must, in accordance with the Regulations made under the *Road Management Act 2004* (the Act), conduct a formal review of its Road Management Plan every four years generally in line with Council elections and the Council Plan.

This report outlines the process undertaken to review the Mitchell Shire Council Road Management Plan (RMP).

#### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT** Council Officers provide a report to Council on the Road Management Plan.

#### BACKGROUND

The road network throughout Mitchell Shire consists of Arterial Roads (managed by VicRoads), Local Roads, which are under the control of the Council, and other roads, which are managed by the party responsible for the relevant land e.g. Forestry Roads in National Parks and State Forests.

The local road and footpath networks are two of Council's largest asset categories consisting of approximately 1,383 km of roads (including 668km of sealed roads and 715km of unsealed road) and 226km of formed pathway. The road network and its

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associated road infrastructure are required to be maintained to ensure road safety, continued function and to provide a level of service acceptable to the community

In 2010, Council adopted the current Road Management Plan (RMP). This Plan was first developed in 2004 in response to the introduction of the *Road Management Act 2004* (the Act) in July 2004.

The Act imposes a duty on road management authorities to inspect, maintain and repair public roads. Council must, in accordance with the regulations made under the Act, conduct a formal review of its RMP every four years generally in line with Council elections and the preparation of a new Council Plan. The current RMP is available for viewing by the public on Council's website.

In summary, a RMP should:

- Describe the way in which Council will fulfil its road management obligations in respect of those local roads within its municipal district;
- Encompass road user needs and expectations within a framework based on meeting reasonable maintenance targets and asset management programs relative to the road network function within the recognised resource limitations;
- Seek to balance the economic, social, safety and environmental expectations of the community, particularly those people and groups who rely on the street network for access to homes, education, commercial and industrial areas;
- Take into consideration the affordability, available resources and management of risks; and
- Be a dynamic document which is subject to continuous improvement, changing legislative requirements and economic, social, environmental and climatic impacts.

In accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004*, a review of the Mitchell Shire RMP has been undertaken in line with policy and operational objectives, resources and best practice. A draft of the 2017 RMP is shown in Attachment 1 of this report and this

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report discusses the proposed amendments which are intended to better reflect Council's capacity to manage its local road network.

**ISSUES AND DISCUSSION**

In undertaking this review, the key elements of the RMP have been benchmarked against the following Council's:

- Strathbogie Shire Council
- Murrindindi Shire Council
- Yarra Ranges Council
- Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Nillumbik Shire Council

These Councils were chosen for benchmarking due to their similar characteristics such as interface and rural Councils, road asset types and network distribution, proximity and likeness to Mitchell Shire Council.

As part of the benchmarking review, the following three main elements have been considered:

- the frequency of proactive asset inspections;
- the point at which intervention (works) are required; and
- the time prescribed for response and repair of identified defects.

Inspection Frequency

The benchmarking process identified that the current RMP has a higher frequency for routine inspections across most assets classes compared to other similar Councils.

The proposed changes are intended to find a more practical balance between inspections frequency and making inspections more meaningful through the collection of better quality data.

It is expected that reducing the quantity of inspections will allow for a realignment of resources and allow for a greater quality of inspection to occur. The reduction in inspection frequencies will allow asset inspectors to undertake additional inspection on

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other road assets including bridges. This may also reduce the reliance on external contractors to undertake this work.

Intervention Standards

Intervention standards are proposed to remain largely unchanged with only minor alterations planned. Proposed changes include:

- Reference to sealed road cracking removed from the RMP – this has been removed as it is a maintenance process rather than a defect item and is consistent with the benchmarking undertaken with the other Councils;
- Shoulder potholes defined as an imperfection if the road width is <5.5m – this has been included to reflect that this is a standard narrow road width which would necessitate the need for passing vehicles to be on the road shoulder at any time;
- Linemarking altered from 60% faded line to 50% faded line matching signage intervention standards;
- Unsealed road scouring (transverse or across the road surface) depth changed from 100mm depth to 150mm depth to match the 150mm depth of longitudinal scouring – this is a more efficient measure for our Road Inspectors and is consistent with the benchmarking undertaken; and
- Unsealed road scouring length reduced from 50m to 25m length.

Council's current RMP intervention levels are generally consistent with benchmarking except for footpaths which previously did not prescribe any intervention level.

Intervention levels for footpaths have been added into the document with the view to assisting Council's risk management processes, to be consistent with benchmarking and advice delivered by Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) at a RMP review workshop conducted in September 2016. The MAV has also undertaken a review of the draft 2017 RMP and provided feedback on inclusions to the plan.

Response and Repair Timeframes

The proposed response and repair timeframes have been adjusted to be consistent with benchmarked Council's and to better reflect the operational objectives, resources of Council and best practice.

Council's current response and repair timeframes are not consistent with the benchmarking of other Councils and have been amended to be more in line with benchmarking. Proposed changes are summarised as follows:

- Individual 'time to respond' timeframes have been removed from the RMP document and have been replaced with a reactive inspection flowchart describing

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how Council will respond to any customer request requiring a reactive inspection regarding a potential RMP defect.

- Rectification periods (4 - 12 weeks) have been added to unsealed road imperfections. This was previously only referred to the annual grading program.

Imperfections including, asphalt edge breaks, asphalt edge drop off's and line-marking did not have rectification times. These have now been added to the draft 2017 RMP.

**CONSULTATION**

In accordance with the Act, Council Officers made the draft plan publicly available for 28 days from 18 April 2017 to 16 May 2017. During this time, community members were invited to make submissions to Council. A total of six submissions were received.

The MAV has also provided feedback and comments to the draft RMP which have been included in the attached draft.

**FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

There is a small financial cost to Council to undertake a review of the current RMP. This included six hundred dollars (\$600) for advertising. Senior Council officers have undertaken the review which has limited the resources required, resource costs and associated risk resulting from the review.

**POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE IMPLICATIONS**

In accordance with section 54 of the *Road Management Act 2004*, Council is obliged to undertake:

- A regular review of its RMP;
- Give notice to the community that the RMP is under review;
- Make the draft plan publicly available; and
- Provide an opportunity for the community to make submissions to the plan

**SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS (SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL)**

The local road network in Mitchell Shire is made up of 1,383km of roads including 668km of sealed roads and 715km of unsealed road. In addition, there are 226km of formed pathway.

The 2017 RMP will assist Council in meeting community expectations and seeks to balance the needs of the community by considering the various influencing factors of risk management, road safety, social needs, environmental influences, and economics.

**CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

The rights protected in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* were considered in preparing this report and it's determined that the subject matter does not raise any human rights issues.

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### **OFFICER DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No officers involved in the preparation of this report have any direct or indirect interest in this matter.

### **CONCLUSION**

Council officers have considered operating objectives, resources and best practice standards in their review of the current RMP. In accordance with the *Road Management Act 2004* and following consideration of submissions, Council officers will prepare a report for the 19 June 2017 Ordinary Council Meeting to adopt the final draft RMP document.