

Draft Road Management Plan 2025 - Summary



Introduction

The Road Management Act 2004 specifies that road authorities, such as Wellington Shire Council, have a duty to inspect, maintain and repair Public Roads. Road Authorities may develop and publish a Road Management Plan, to set the relevant standard in relation to the discharge of these duties and to establish a system for road management functions based on policy and operational objectives, taking into account available resources.

Wellington Shire Council's first Road Management Plan was prepared and adopted in 2004 following the introduction of the *Road Management Act 2004*. The Road Management Plan has been subsequently reviewed in 2009, 2012, 2013, 2017 and 2021. The Road Management Plan 2021 was adopted by Council on 15 June 2021 and remains current.

The review of the Road Management Plan is being undertaken in line with the section 54 *Road Management Act 2004* and the part 3 *Road Management Act (General) Regulations 2016*. The purpose of this review is to:

- Update Council's Road Management Plan in line with guidance provided by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV);
- Review Council's intervention levels in line with MAV benchmarking and guidance utilising Road Management Plans from other Councils; and
- Improve understanding of Council's vegetation maintenance practices including diagrams.

Proposed public consultation

As required by the *Road Management Act (General) Regulations 2016*, notice to amend the Road Management Plan will be published in the Victorian Government Gazette and the Gippsland Times, in addition to a report summarising the findings and conclusions of the Road Management Plan for review on Council's website. This consultation process will be undertaken for a minimum period of 28 days to seek public feedback on the proposed Draft Road Management Plan 2025.

A copy of the Draft Road Management Plan 2025 will be made available online via Council's website, and in hard copy at the Sale and Yarram Service Centres and Council's libraries. A breakdown of Council's proposed engagement is below:

- Posts on online social media including Facebook
- Notifications in local newspapers and community newsletters where possible
- Draft documents and online survey available through Your Wellington Your Say
- Opportunities to discuss any concerns directly with Council officers when required

Review of Road Management Plan

The review of Council's Road Management Plan was conducted in 2024, and will continue into 2025 pending further legal reviews and Councillor / community feedback. It has so far primarily involved benchmarking Wellington Shire's current Road Management Plan with the plans of our surrounding Gippsland Councils, as well as a review of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Road Management Plan Road Management Plan template which has been incorporated into our document. This benchmarking provided updated data relating to Wellington Shire's response times, inspection frequencies, and intervention levels.

The review considered the MAV Road Management Plan template which suggested including additional information in our plan between Sections 2 – 8. This mainly involved updating wording for our processes such as emergency works, road boundary agreements, incident claims, consent to work within road reserves, etc. Further information on our additions from the MAV template is summarised below. The purpose of this is to provide the community with more information and further clarification on our road management processes.

The review involved a benchmarking process for the Road Management Plans of the surrounding Gippsland Councils, to ensure our defect intervention levels are appropriate in line with our neighbours. Council officers found that whilst the majority of our defect intervention levels are appropriate, it is considered Wellington Shire may be over servicing in some areas such as pothole sizes, kerb defects, and footpath trip hazards and cracks. The proposed intervention levels have been nominated in our draft Road Management Plan 2025. These alterations have been suggested considering the ongoing budget constraints affecting the organisation, and the large increase in incident claims (including court cases) since the last iteration of the Road Management Plan. Increasing the suggested intervention levels will improve Councils risk mitigation for incident claims, but is not expected to impact on Councils proactive road and footpath maintenance programs.

Wellington Shire is not proposing to alter *Appendix A Section 2 - Reasonably Required for General Public Use Evaluation Criteria* which determines the roads in which Wellington Shire inspects, maintains and repairs. All customer requests submitted to Wellington Shire in relation to road maintenance to non-maintained roads are assessed in accordance with the criteria in the Road Management Plan. Given Council's performance in the Community Satisfaction Survey, the low number of requests Council received over the 2023/24 financial year in relation to extending the road maintenance area, and in consideration of existing operational budgets and financial performance, there is no proposal to alter the Reasonably Required for General Public Use Evaluation Criteria as part of this Road Management Plan review.

List of proposed amendments to Road Management Plan

Administrative Changes:

- 2.2 Relationships with other documents
 - Updated references to the current Council Plan
- 3.1 Maintenance Demarcation (Boundary) Agreements
 - Updated title in line with MAV guidance
- 3.3 Roads not listed on the Register
 - Added in line with MAV guidance. Provides further information on roads which Council does not maintain.
- 4 Responsibility of Road Users
 - Updated wording in line with MAV guidance. Further defines the responsibilities of a road user.
- 4.1 Incident Claims
 - Added in line with MAV guidance. Provides more information on Council's claims process.
- 4.2 Consent for work within a road reserve
 - Added in line with MAV guidance. Provides more information on Council's working within road reserve process.
- 5.1.2 Rural and urban vegetation responsibilities
 - Updated wording and provided diagrams to explain Council's vegetation management processes and the defect intervention levels for both roads and paths.
 - Included reference to gazetted Over Dimensional and Oversize and Overmass routes and providing an increased height of 5 metres for these roads.
- 7.3.1 Proactive Repairs
 - Updated title in line with MAV guidance
- 7.3.2 Reactive Repairs
 - Added 'Installing safety barriers' in line with MAV guidance.
- 7.3.3 Emergency Works
 - Added in line with MAV guidance. Provides more information on Council's emergency inspection processes.
- 7.5 Asset levels of Service
 - Added in line with MAV guidance. Provides a summary of how Council determines its current and ongoing levels of service for its assets.
- 8 Customer Requests and Notification
 - Added in line with MAV guidance. Provides more information on Council's processes once a customer request is received, as well as some possible outcomes following an inspection.

- Appendix A - Reasonably Required for General Public Use Evaluation Criteria
 - Updated wording to provide more clarity
- Appendix E – Inspection Frequencies
 - Added information on Council’s Level 2 inspections for bridges based on MAV Road Management Plan template.
- Appendix F – Priority Response Defects
 - Removed reference to missing signs as it is already referenced in the defect table in Appendix C

Substantive changes:

- Appendix C - Road Defect Intervention Levels and Response Times
 - Alteration to defect intervention levels for sealed roads, missing pit lids, kerb and channel, and line marking in line with MAV guidance and following a review of other Road Management Plans from Latrobe, East Gippsland, Baw Baw and South Gippsland.
 - Added new vegetation defect for gazetted Over Dimensional and Oversize and Overmass routes to provide a height clearance of 5 metres.
 - Added new kerb defect to cover horizontal movement.
- Appendix D – Footpath and Shared Path Defect Intervention Levels and Response Times
 - 1. Defects - Alteration to defect intervention levels for shared and footpath defects in line with MAV guidance and following a review of other Road Management Plans from Latrobe, East Gippsland, Baw Baw and South Gippsland.
 - Bridge Inspection Frequencies – added in reference to Level 2 inspections