

Roads Working Party Meeting - Notes

Date: Wednesday 22 March 2023

Time: 3.00pm

Location: Minlaton Council Office

Meeting Objective: To consider the future utilisation of the road network within our Council area for community access, freight, tourism and agricultural needs.

Item No.	Item	Who	When
1	Attendees and Apologies		
1.1	Attendees Mayor Darren Braund (Mayor DB) (Ex Officio) Councillor Naomi Bittner (Cr NB) Councillor Alan Headon (Cr AH) Councillor Scott Hoyle (Cr SH) Councillor Roger Johns (Cr RJ) (Arrived 3.18pm) Andrew Cameron (AWC), Chief Executive Officer Andre Kompler (AMK), Director Assets and Infrastructure Services Michael McCauley (MSM), Asset Manager Roy Dick (RAD), Works Manager Richard Murdoch (RM), Community Representative - Agricultural Industry Greg Twelftree (GT), Community Representative - Agricultural Industry Michael Cadd (MC), Community Representative - Transport Industry Anthony Trengove (AT), Community Representative - Transport Industry Karen Brokenshire (KLB) (Observer), Executive Assistant to the Director Assets and Infrastructure Services Kira Tapps (KLT) (Note Taker), Executive Assistant to the Director Assets and Infrastructure Services		
1.2	Apologies Shane Carty (SC), Community Representative - Transport Industry		
2	Review of Previous Notes		
	RM requested that it be reflected in the notes of this meeting that at the Roads Working Party meeting held on 26 July 2022 he spoke about the possibility of Council implementing an education program/signage for heavy vehicles.		

3	Appointment of Chair		
	<p>As result of changes to the elected member representatives on the Roads Working Party following the 2022 Council election, the Roads Working Party was required to appoint a new Chair.</p> <p>Cr AH nominated Cr NB who accepted the nomination. As there were no other nominations Cr NB was elected unanimously.</p>		
4	Proposed Changes to the Terms of Reference		
	<p>As a result of changes to the elected member representatives on the Roads Working Party following the 2022 Council election, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Roads Working Party were required to be reviewed.</p> <p>Council staff have reviewed the ToR and have made the required amendments, as well as some suggested changes to the purpose of the Working Party, the responsibility of the Director Assets and Infrastructure Services, and the frequency of meetings.</p> <p>The Working Party conditionally approved the proposed changes to the ToR, pending further feedback from the Working Party.</p>	Roads Working Party members	29 March 2023
5	Appointment of Community Representative - Agriculture		
	<p>As some members of the Working Party are aware, Ben Wundersitz, one of the community representatives from the agricultural industry, resigned late in the last term.</p> <p>Following the creation of the Working Party in 2018, Council called for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from representatives of the agricultural and transport industries to join the Working Party.</p> <p>The EOI was placed in the Yorke Peninsula Country Times, as well as on Council's website and Facebook page.</p> <p>The same process will be followed to appoint a new representative from the agricultural industry.</p> <p>In addition, Cr NB suggested that the EOI also be shared with Grain Producers SA and local agricultural bureaus.</p>		

	<p>AWC also advised that he will contact SC to confirm that he is still willing to be involved in the Working Party.</p> <p>If SC wishes to resign from the Working Party the EOI will also call for nominations from representatives of the transport industry.</p> <p>Following the close of the EOI, nominations will be circulated to the Working Party for discussion at the next Working Party meeting.</p>		
6	Future Directions (HDS) Report		
	<p>AMK provided the following as background to the Working Party on the development of the Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy to date.</p> <p><i>The Strategy for managing risks of B Double+ access to YPC's road network post HDS commodity route reviews</i> (draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy) is Council staff's response to the reports provided to Council by HDS Australia following their review of Council's road network.</p> <p>In 2018, Council engaged HDS Australia to undertake an investigation into the safety aspects of gazetted B Double General Mass Limit routes, B Double Commodity routes and other potential B Double routes within the Council area.</p> <p>The aim of the Network Level Heavy Vehicle Route Assessment and Risk Analysis was to determine the overall risk of each road segment and categorise the identified risk as Low (P4), Moderate (P3), High (P2) or Very High (P1), in accordance with accepted heavy vehicle route assessment criteria.</p> <p>The Network Level Heavy Vehicle Route Assessment and Risk Analysis was divided into two phases. Phase One, which was completed in May 2019, focussed on Council's rural sealed roads and High Use sheeted roads, which make up approximately 1,000km of Council's road network. Phase Two, which was completed in February 2022, focussed on the remainder of Council's unsealed road network (Medium Use and Low Use sheeted roads).</p> <p>In June 2022, a report was presented to Council to inform Council of the outcomes of the Network Level Heavy Vehicle Route Assessment and Risk Analysis and seek their approval to move to the next steps of responding to the consultant's assessment.</p>		

One of the recommendations from the report presented to the June 2022 Council meeting was that Council liaise with the Roads Working Party and bring a report to a future Council meeting on the proposed long term risk management strategy and proposed funding source for future budgets to manage heavy vehicle access to Council's road network.

In July 2022, the Roads Working Party met to look at the next steps of this process, which included the Working Party's input into the subsequent community engagement process and their identification of roads of concern and the issues that are causing concern on said roads.

In October 2022, AMK undertook community consultation in relation to the development of a Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy.

The community consultation started with a Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy Survey, which sought to gauge opinions on the proposed Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy from those who primarily use Council's unsealed road network, as well as the possible measures to address the P1 and P2 issues identified by HDS Australia. Additionally, two information sessions were provided by AMK (one in Maitland and the other in Yorketown).

The draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy is a working document, which is being presented to the Working Party as a first step before being presented to elected members at the Elected Members Information and Briefing Session being held in April.

Following the Elected Members Information and Briefing Session, a report will be presented to the May 2023 Council meeting, seeking a resolution from Council to adopt the way forward in managing heavy vehicle access to Council's road network.

The draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy looks to define a way forward to balancing community road safety with transport access needs and community capacity to pay.

As part of this, the strategy proposes the reclassification of the unsealed road categories within Council's Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP).

Currently the TAMP splits rural unsealed roads into the following categories:

- High Use Sheeted

- Medium Use Sheeted
- Low Use Sheeted (High Wear)
- Low Use Sheeted (Medium Wear)
- Low Use Sheeted (Low Wear)
- Formed and Graded
- Unformed Roads and Tracks

It is not possible, with the level of funding provided by Council, for Council to maintain the rural unsealed road network within the current seven classifications. The kilometres of road classified as sheeted, coupled with the level of funding, translates into sheeted roads being resheeted once every 87 years. The industry norm for resheeting is closer to once every 20 years.

Part of the strategy is to do more on some higher use roads, and a lot less on the majority of low use sheeted roads. This means most low use roads will no longer be resheeted and their standard will drop. The best that could be offered for many of these low use roads is routine grading at the right time of the year, when there is moisture, and the occasional patch sheet repair of major hazards/road surface blow outs.

Staff will prioritise the funding provided relative to the road category and Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes. Unsealed road categories will need to be rationalised from seven into three, as follows:

- High and Medium Use Sheeted
- Low Use Formed and Graded
- Unformed Roads and Tracks

AMK provided an overview of the current permit system and advised that it is here to stay. AMK stated that the permit system is the practical reality of the current situation and acknowledged that the majority of permit holders abide by the conditions of their permit.

Discussion ensued amongst the Working Party, with Working Party members expressing their views of the current system and sharing their experiences in operating within it.

AMK summarised the feedback received during the community consultation process (Annexure 6 to the draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy) and noted that one common theme was that there had been minimal accidents involving heavy vehicles.

This feedback is a mirror of reality; however, it is important for the Working Party to remember that just because something has not happened yet, does not mean that it will not happen in the future, particularly with changing visitor use across the road network.

AMK emphasised that Council, as the road manager, has a responsibility to manage risk. The purpose of the Network Level Heavy Vehicle Route Assessment and Risk Analysis was to highlight the risks posed by the road network. These risks now need to be looked at in the context of what might happen if a heavy vehicle interacts with a light vehicle.

Ultimately, the system needs self-regulation, as industry and the community are also owners of the road network.

AMK provided a brief summary of the outcomes of the Network Level Heavy Vehicle Route Assessment and Risk Analysis, in the context of the P1 and P2 issues identified.

Phase Two of the Network Level Heavy Vehicle Route Assessment and Risk Analysis identified that 12.7% of the unsealed road network assessed was affected by P1 issues and 23.1% of the unsealed road network assessed was affected by P2 issues.

AMK reiterated that P1 issues pose a Very High risk and, in the context of this risk, need to be either fixed now or the pre-approval for 26 m B Double access revoked.

AMK reiterated that P2 issues pose a High risk, which Council should be working towards addressing with a program of works.

AMK emphasised that the biggest concern is how Council are going to address the P1 issues identified, and how Council can continue to allow access to these roads now that these issues have been identified.

	<p>Discussion ensued amongst the Working Party into the potential implications that these measures may have on members of the transport and agricultural industries.</p> <p>AMK summarised the five drivers for change that have been identified in the draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy, which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough funding for the existing road network and provision of such funding not likely. • Desire for longer heavy vehicle configurations, which require higher standard roads. • Increasing visitor numbers to the Council area, which increases the risk of vehicular interaction no matter how many truck signs are on the road network. • Liability – where Council now has an independent engineering assessment of network deficiencies saying P1 issues should be fixed or the pre-approval for 26 m B Double access revoked. • The need to manage and deal with changing risk, and not ignore it, particularly with changing society and community more willing to pursue perceived rights and/or look for someone to blame. <p>Discussion ensued amongst the Working Party in relation to some of the measures that other councils within the state undertake to manage the risks posed by heavy vehicles on their road networks, with MC flagging the use of different speeds for different vehicles. AMK undertook to look into this further.</p> <p>AMK provided a summary of the responses to the Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy Survey, which is included in the draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy, as well as an overview of the outcomes from the information sessions.</p> <p>AMK advised that the two biggest discussion points from the information sessions was the uptake of 30 m A Doubles and speed.</p> <p>Further discussion ensued amongst the Working Party in relation to the need to manage heavy vehicle speeds on Council's unsealed roads, with AMK advising that speed limit signage is normally not placed on unsealed roads, due to the changing surface condition and the need for drivers to drive to the condition of the road. Placing speed limit signage on unsealed roads can create a</p>	AMK	Next Roads Working Party Meeting
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misconception amongst drivers that the condition of the road is up to that speed, which is not necessarily the case.

AMK reiterated that whatever is decided in the draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy will impact the TAMP and emphasised that the TAMP is currently underfunded.

The purpose of the proposed changes to the rural unsealed road categories within the TAMP is for Council to make the most of its available resources, as there are only two known sources of grant funding available to Council, the Special Local Roads Program (SLRP) and Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (HVSPP).

Council has previously received funding through the SLRP to seal the Clinton Road and is currently sealing the first 1.82 km of the unsealed section of the North Coast Road using SLRP funding.

Council is also currently upgrading the heavy vehicle access route to Cheetham Salt in Price (Gardner Street and Fowler Terrace) using funding received through the HVSPP.

It may be possible for Council to receive funding through the HVSPP to upgrade key heavy vehicle access roads, such as Clinton Road (to the quarries), Melton South Road (to Clinton Sands) and Crowell Road (to Peninsula Quarries); however, grant funding will not be available to address the P1 and P2 issues identified in the Network Level Heavy Vehicle Route Assessment and Risk Analysis, as this does not meet the funding criteria.

Therefore, Council must look to other potential funding avenues, such as loans, to address these issues.

Council has the capacity to borrow money for long-term projects; however, this should be driven by the community, as it is ultimately the community who pays back the loan.

The use of loans to address these issues is not currently factored into Council's Long Term Financial Plan and will need to be discussed in the future.

Another alternative could be to redirect the funding that Council currently has available for unsealed road upgrades (patch sheeting and resheeting) and use this to address P1 and P2 issues.

Discussion ensued in relation to this alternative and its potential to negatively impact the backlog that Council currently has when it comes to unsealed road renewals.

Discussion also ensued in relation to the proposed primary production rate increase, 2% of which will be used to address P1 issues in 2023-24.

This equates to approximately \$400,000, which can realistically deliver:

- Some grader widening on crests to mitigate lack of sight distance on roads with poor geometric layout.
- Programs of major vegetation removal and control of the same at intersections to achieve improved sight lines.
- Putting in place revised “right of way” signage to favour directions with the most traffic.
- More use of “Stop” signage in place of “Give Way” signage to afford more driver time for risk assessment and decision on whether to proceed or not proceed.
- Very minor intersection adjustments over the next ten years provided the same does not impact utilities and does not require land acquisition.
- Some signage on major routes during harvest time and increased education awareness sought through social media.
- Revoking pre-approval on roads with P1 issues currently pre-approved for B Double access and dealing with permits on a case by case basis.
- P2 roads might remain without change to the current B Double pre-approval, but pre-approval on others might have to be revoked on account of the level of traffic use and perceived risk to non-local visitor traffic. Pertaining to revoking pre-approval on certain roads, any ongoing heavy vehicle road access needs would be subject to conditions and be considered by Council through the National Heavy Vehicle Regulator portal permit application process.

Discussion ensued in relation to the management of roadside vegetation, with AMK providing information in relation to Council's requirements under the Native Vegetation Council's Guidelines for the Management of Roadside Native Vegetation and Regrowth Vegetation.

	<p>Discussion also ensued in relation to the possible use of contract graders; however, it was agreed that this would be discussed at a future meeting.</p> <p>Further discussion also ensued in relation to the proposed changes to signage and the possible use of educational signage.</p> <p>Cr SH provided statistics from Viterra in relation to the uptake in the use of 30 m A Doubles during harvest, which has increased from 16% of all deliveries to Ardrossan and Port Giles in 2017-18 to 53% of all deliveries in 2022-23.</p> <p>Discussion ensued in relation to the current permit, pre-approval and gazettal systems, with Cr NB seeking feedback from the representatives of the agricultural industry as to what any changes to these systems may mean for them.</p> <p>It was agreed that time is needed to review the draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy and that this can be shared outside of this meeting; however, it was emphasised that this is a working document.</p> <p>Cr SH advised that there are other issues that need to be addressed outside of those presented in the draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy, such as the ever increasing widths of agricultural equipment.</p> <p>AMK acknowledged that there are many and varied issues in relation to the use of Council's road network by heavy vehicles, including agricultural equipment; however, he is looking at these issues through the lens of the reality of funding.</p> <p>Cr NB asked if it would be beneficial for a representative of the tourism industry to be appointed to the Working Party. The Working Party agreed and requested that the EOI for the appointment of a representative of the agricultural industry, and possibly transport industry, also include a representative from the tourism industry.</p> <p>RM asked if there should be a designated group looking at funding for roads. AWC responded and advised that this is something that Council already does.</p> <p>AMK advised that currently 1/3 of Council's annual budget allocation is spent on roads and reiterated that it is all about finding a balance.</p>	<p>Roads Working Party members to forward comment on the draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy back to KLB/AMK.</p>	<p>17 April 2023</p>
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	AMK stated that he understands that there will not necessarily be a consensus as to the way forward in managing heavy vehicle access to Council's road network.		
7	Other Business Items for Future Meetings		
	<p>The Working Party noted the following business items, which will be discussed at future meetings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 m A Double Access to Council's Road Network and the Conditions that Apply to Some Permits (Seeking a Uniform Approach) • Speed Limits on Unsealed Roads for Vehicles Above Class 1 Licence Operation • Current Patrol Grading Schedule and Output Achieved by Individual Sectors <p>AMK noted that some of these items are addressed in the draft Heavy Vehicle Access Strategy.</p>		
8	Next Meeting		
	3.00pm, Wednesday 19 April 2023.		

Meeting Closed: 5.01pm