

## 1.8 SCHOOL CROSSING SUPERVISION TENDER

Responsible Director: Peter Panagakos

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*That Council calls for tenders for the provision of School Crossing Supervision for the City of Monash for the period of 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2027.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

This report proposes calling for tenders for the provision of school crossing supervisors for the City of Monash for the period of 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2027.

It is intended to prepare a tender for a contract of five years' duration with an option for, two, two-year extensions.

### **BACKGROUND**

The current school crossing supervision is primarily delivered through a contractual arrangement with *Chandler Macleod Group Ltd* who provide 87 School Crossing Supervisors with an additional set of relief staff.

A further seven supervisors are directly employed by Council but are managed under the terms of the current contract. As Council staff have retired, Council has not replaced those staff and instead the positions are incorporated into the contractual arrangement with Chandler Macleod. The total number of crossing supervisors is 94.

Chandler Macleod have held the contract to provide school crossing supervisors since 2002. The current contract commenced 30 June 2017 for an initial term of three years and in June 2020 an option to extend the contract by a further two years was exercised. The current contract expires on 30 June 2022.

### **DISCUSSION**

The School Crossing Supervision program was introduced in 1975 under a joint funding arrangement between the State (Department of Transport formally VicRoads) and Councils.

At present the Department of Transport supports a 50/50 funding model for this service and have provided Council with funding of \$579,980 for the 2021/2022 financial year.

For the 20/21FY, \$1,206,592 (inclusive of \$579,980-in funding received from the Department of Transport) was allocated in the Council budget to deliver the School Crossings program. Actual expenditure for this period was \$919,430 being a lesser amount due to the school closures associated with the pandemic.

It is understood that funding will continue to be allocated under the provisions of the School Crossings Subsidy Scheme.

The scheme is administered by VicRoads who uses a detailed formula to decide if a supervisor at a crossing is warranted. The formula is based on the number of children (primary and secondary are treated differently) using the crossing and the number of vehicles passing through the crossing.

There is also a minimum requirement related to the number of pedestrians crossing and vehicles passing.

Subsidies may also be provided for 'other crossings' on account of special needs (e.g., children with disabilities) or other factors affecting safety, such as excessive vehicle speed, road geometry, limited sight distance, volume of heavy vehicles or road width.

Where a crossing meets the prescribed 'warrant', VicRoads will generally provide a subsidy for that crossing. Less certain is how 'special needs' crossings are dealt with in that a crossing subsidy may be provided one year but not the next.

There are currently 94 school crossings (at 82 sites) within the municipality that are actively supervised by Council.

Recruiting and retaining school crossing supervisors has, for many years been a considerable challenge for the Local Government sector and this continues to be the case. What had traditionally been a highly dedicated and reliable workforce with low rates of attrition, has for a number of years been a more dynamic workforce with higher rates of attrition.

In addition to the above, benchmarking with other Councils have seen poor general health become a factor, along with fears of the current pandemic situation which see the older community hesitating to take up the role or in some cases be vaccinated.

Prior to moving to a contractual arrangement for the provision of staff, Council was required to commit considerable resources to advertise, recruit, interview, and train candidates on a constant basis. Considerable resources were also committed to the day-to-day management of employees including leave management, back-fill for unexpected absences and monitoring performance.

Previous tenders have attracted interest from labour force providers, such as the current contractor, who are better equipped to provide labour from a range of sources and at relatively short notice.

Having the workforce primarily provided under a contractual arrangement obviates the need for Council to maintain a significant workforce of 'permanent part-time' employees where attrition rates are known to be high and there a well-established difficulty in filling vacancies.

### ***SCOPE OF SERVICE***

The tender will include the following key activities:

- Provision of 87 trained and equipped Crossing Supervisors
- Replacement of Crossing Supervisors directly employed by Council
- Initial training and refresher training for Crossing Supervisors
- Maintaining a pool of relief Council School Crossing Supervisors
- Compliance with "working with children" legislation

Workload indicators and key performance criteria are nominated in the service specification to enable proper monitoring and evaluation of the service provider's performance to be undertaken. Penalty provisions for any failure to provide crossing supervisors as contracted are also nominated in the service specification.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

Provision will need to be made in the operating budgets for 2022 -2027 for the continuation of the service by contract.

### ***CONCLUSION***

School Crossing Supervision is an important service delivered by Council.

Over many years this service has been primarily delivered under contractual arrangements and Council no longer recruits Crossing Supervisors as direct employees.

The current contract which is held by Chandler Macleod Ltd expires on 30 June 2022 and it is therefore recommended that Council calls for tenders for the provision of School Crossing Supervisors for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2027.