

## 6.2 GRAFFITI AND POOR MAINTENANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE CONTROLLED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

Submitting Councillor: Tina Samardzija

### **MOTION**

*That Council:*

1. *Writes to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety, the Hon. Ben Carroll MP regarding the poor standard of maintenance of main roads and associated infrastructure under the control of the Department of Transport (DoT), highlighting the impacts on:
  - a. *road condition, including safety of cyclists due to lack of street sweeping;*
  - b. *local flooding and safety of roads during storms due to a lack of drainage pit maintenance; and*
  - c. *community pride, amenity and safety perceptions due to poor graffiti response and overgrown and poorly maintained central medians and freeway surrounds.**
2. *Supports creating an advocacy group of Monash and other councils with the Municipal Association of Victoria to improve the DoT maintenance standards across the region.*
3. *Requests the Minister to review and increase budgets as appropriate.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The standard of maintenance delivered by the Department of Transport (DoT), formerly VicRoads, on its road infrastructure within the City of Monash and other municipalities has been poor for some time now. Dramatic improvement is required to address the impacts on safety, asset condition and community amenity.

### **DISCUSSION**

The DoT is responsible for maintaining major arterial roads within the municipality, such as Ferntree Gully Road, Wellington Road and Blackburn Road. By their nature, these roads have the highest traffic volumes.

The DoT has been steadily dropping the level of maintenance and visual amenity of arterial roads under its responsibilities. This has weighed heavily on community sentiment and the perceptions of safety and care of the municipality.

In particular, attention is drawn to the following maintenance and presentation issues:

- Lack of attention and responsiveness to graffiti – long stretches of fence lines along Wellington Road/Monash Freeway and other DoT assets in Mulgrave especially have been beset with graffiti for years. The community and Council are fed up with DoT's lack of responsiveness, and while Council has on occasion attended to this graffiti to respond to community concerns, this cost-

shifting and lack of responsibility and accountability by DoT should not continue.

- Lack of street sweeping – this affects the presentation of roads and, in particular, their useability and safety for cyclists. Due to community concerns, Council is currently providing street sweeping to approximately 80% of arterial roads and has previously requested annual compensation or a street sweeping program from DoT. To date no compensation has been received.
- Lack of pit cleaning – this is exacerbated by the lack of street sweeping. Council in 2013 and in subsequent meetings provided DoT with a list of high priority pits (i.e. those which affect roads and flooding of properties), and while DoT provided an initial clean of the pits, these have not been maintained since. The lack of pit cleaning causes flooding issues and takes up valuable time from emergency services. It is also noticeable that the blocked pits contribute to damage of pavements and kerbs, which is considered poor asset management.
- Infrequent mowing and maintenance standards for central medians – this ranges from poor frequency of grass mowing and inadequate weed management in concrete and brick paved areas. This particularly affects the public's amenity and sentiment of their local area and affects entry into some commercial activity centres such as Clayton, Mt Waverley, Glen Waverley, Huntingdale and Oakleigh.
- Poor maintenance of bus stops, Clearway and No Stopping Signs on arterial roads – some signs are rusted and cannot be read or enforced. Recently, the DoT upgraded the Clearway signs on selected arterial roads to support increased patrolling and enforcement.

These issues are not new and have been the subject of numerous discussions and correspondence with the DoT from officers and the community. At best, this has resulted in a reactive and temporary response rather than a proactive and sustained approach.

Previous requests from the DoT for Council to take on the maintenance is considered cost shifting and comes at a cost to Council and our ratepayers.

### **CONCLUSION**

Council needs to advocate at the highest levels for improved maintenance and presentation of Department of Transport controlled roads and infrastructure as dramatic improvement is required to address its impact on safety, community perception, and asset management.