

LODDON SHIRE COUNCIL

ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT PLAN



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This document is available in alternative formats (e.g. larger font) if requested.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Loddon Shire Council acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land comprising the Loddon Shire Council area. Council would like to pay respect to their Elders both past and present.

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PART A: THE PLAN

1 INTRODUCTION

The Loddon Shire Council is charged with managing roadsides to support the safe and efficient function of roads, whilst also maintaining other values and uses such as:

- Providing environmental and cultural values
- Supporting adjacent land uses, such as agriculture
- Fire prevention and emergency management
- Providing for utility construction and maintenance.

The development of the Roadside Management Plan is identified as an action in the Loddon Shire Council Plan 2017-2021 under the following strategic objective:

Provide leadership which contributes to the sustainability of our region.

The Roadside Management Plan will be Council’s main guiding document to set the direction for roadside management in the municipality. It identifies goals for roadside management in the context of Council’s statutory obligations and outlines strategic actions to help achieve these goals.

Council recognises the importance of working with all community, agency and organisational stakeholders with an interest in roadside management to implement the actions and achieve the goals of this Plan. Monitoring the progress and effectiveness of the Plan over time will also be important.

This plan will replace the Loddon Shire Roadside Management Plan that was prepared in December 2000.

1.1 Structure of the plan

There are four parts to this plan, which is described in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Structure of the Loddon Shire Roadside Management Plan

1.2 Purpose and scope

This Roadside Management Plan relates to Loddon Shire Council managed or local roads only. Within the Shire, there are approximately 4,800km of local roads and road reserves that are managed by Loddon Shire Council.

Main arterial roads managed by VicRoads, unused road reserves, and public roads managed by state government (Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning) are not covered by this plan.

Council road assets are classified according to their function and surface type. Maintenance intervention levels and response times are set according to road hierarchy. The road hierarchy in the Loddon Shire Council is explained in Figure 2.

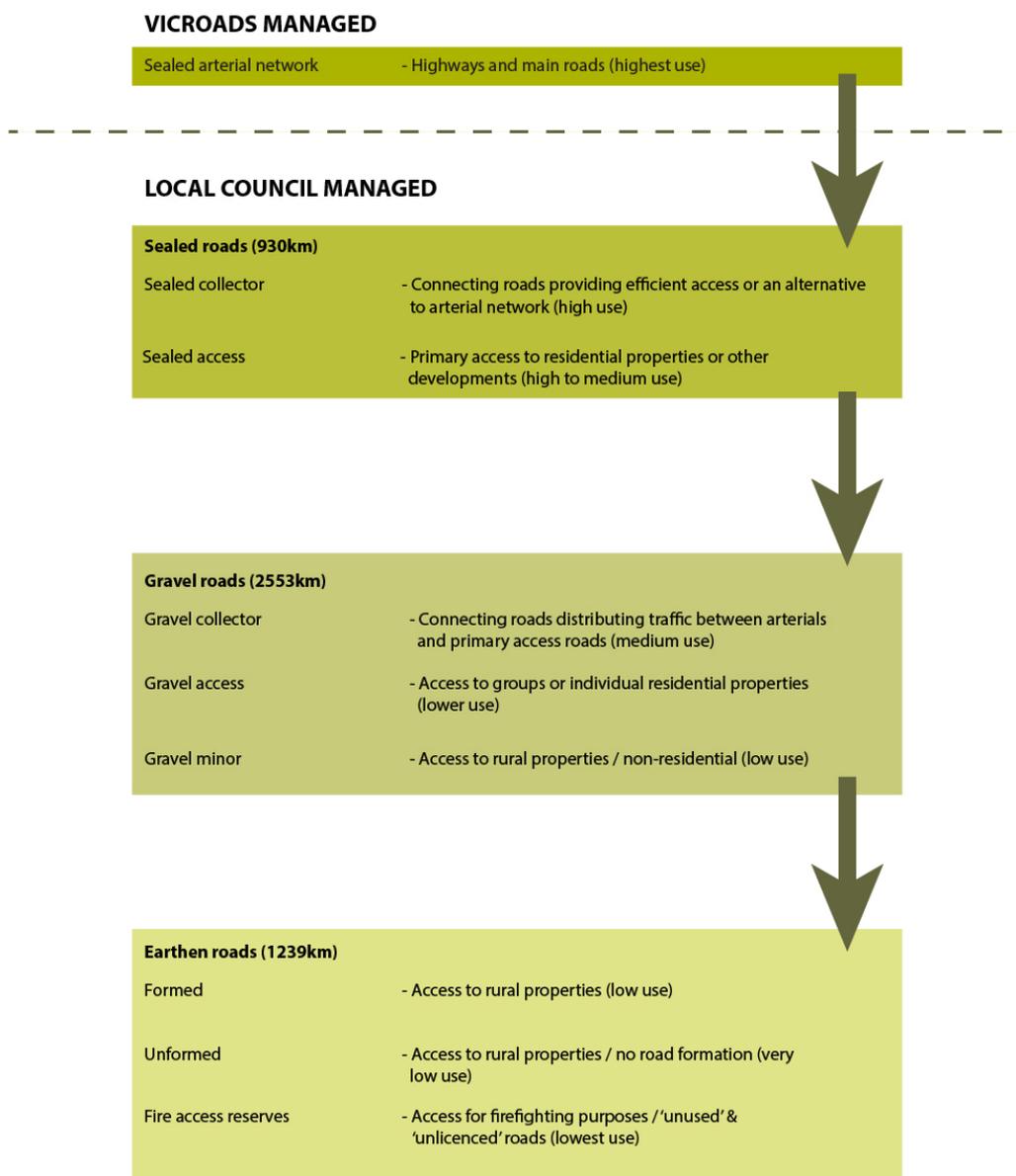


Figure 2: Loddon Council road hierarchy grouping (highest to lowest)

Source: Loddon Shire Council Road Management Plan 2017

The purpose of this plan is to provide Council with the strategic direction to manage roadside reserves under Council's jurisdiction. The plan needs to integrate existing legislation, policies and

programs relevant to roadside management in a format that is easily understood and workable for Council staff and the community.

The plan will aim to guide the management of roadsides to:

- Protect and enhance the safe and efficient function of roads
- Protect and enhance the function and values of roadsides
- Manage risks on roadsides
- Meet Council's legislative responsibilities
- Promote the value and function of roadsides to the community.

1.3 Development of the plan

Community and stakeholder engagement has been central to the development of a plan that is locally relevant and practical, and addresses the range of values and threats associated with road reserves in Loddon Shire.

An initial stakeholder workshop held during May 2017 identified and talked through important issues and opportunities for roadside management and resulted in the development of an Issues and Opportunities Paper. The Issues and Opportunities Paper was made available for public comment during July and August 2017.

Five community open house sessions were conducted across the Shire during August 2017, providing an opportunity for community members to contribute their concerns and ideas on roadside management. Collectively, the feedback received from community, stakeholders and Council staff has contributed to the development of this Roadside Management Plan.

1.4 Users of the plan

The plan will be used by a wide range of stakeholders with an interest in roadside management. This will include but not be limited to, Council staff as well as service and utility providers, CFA personnel and community members, including adjoining landholders.

PART B: ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT IN LODDON SHIRE

2 ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT

2.1 What is a roadside?

The road reserve comprises the land from fence line to fence line. The road formation and the roadside are within the reserve, as indicated in Figure 3. The road formation consists of formed pavement layers, a wearing course (either sealed or unsealed) and its drainage system, usually a table drain on either side of the formation. The roadside is the land from the upside of the table drain to the adjacent fence line.

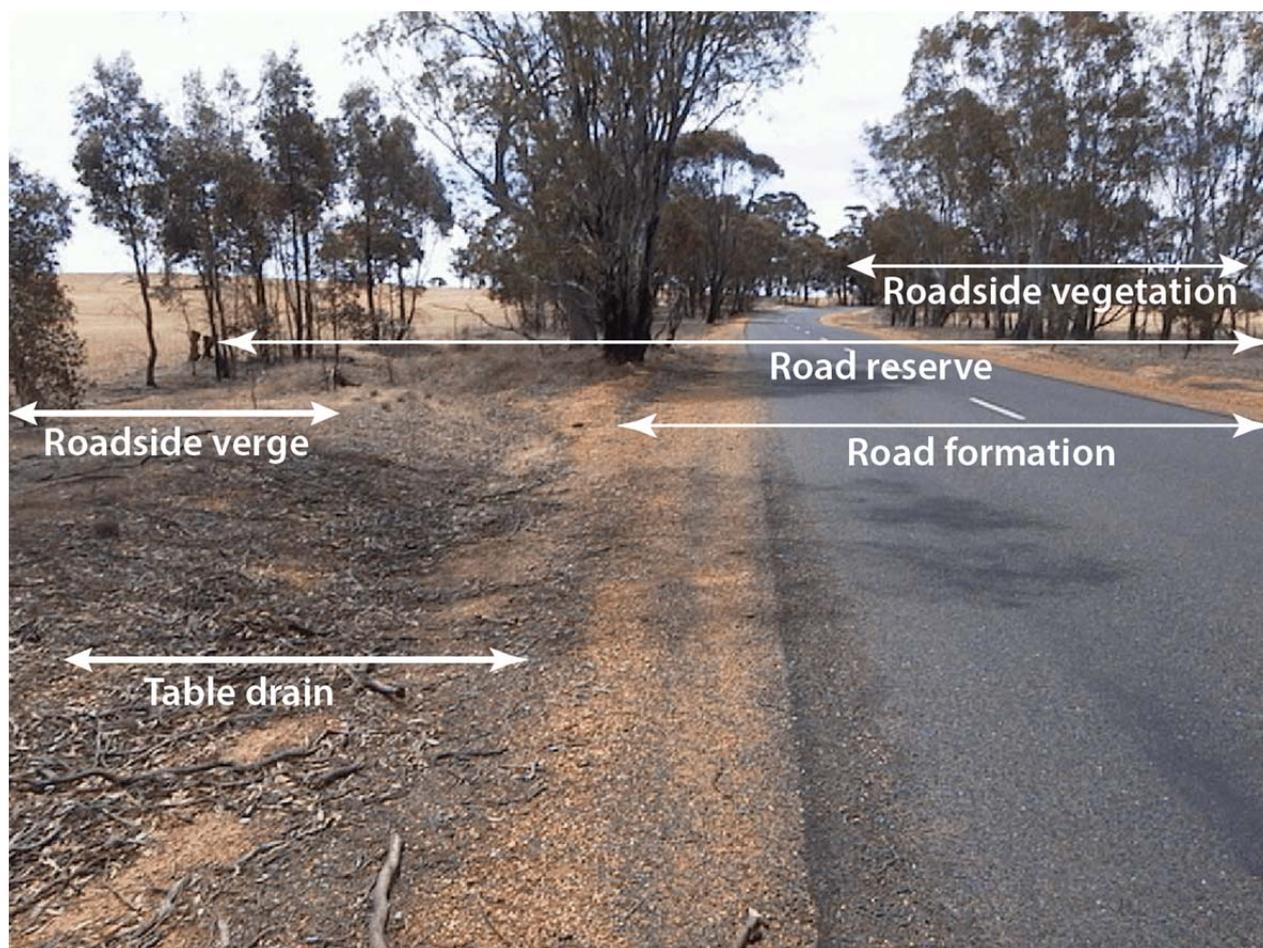


Figure 3: The components of a roadside: road reserve, road formation, road drainage system, roadside verge, vegetation and adjoining property

It should be noted that this is just one representation of a road reserve and across the rural road network many of these elements will vary according to terrain and other natural environmental features.

For example:

- Table drains are not always readily defined, especially in very flat terrain
- There could be either cut or fill batters and/or embankments in close proximity to the road formation
- The roadside will support combinations of exotic and native vegetation, of varying structure, including different heights and densities of plant communities
- The boundary of the road reserve may also be difficult to define, particularly where it adjoins public land such as National Parks or other reserves.

These factors in conjunction with road classification (and desired maintenance standards) will affect decisions about appropriate management of the road formation and roadside.

2.2 Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities for roadside management vary according to road classification. The Loddon Shire Council has responsibility for the management of local roads and roadsides, whereas the management of main roads and highways is the responsibility of VicRoads. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) manages particular forest roads within the Shire.

This Plan is focussed on Council managed roadsides only.

In managing roadsides, Council also needs to also consider the legislative responsibilities of various other agencies, organisations and individuals under many different Acts and Regulations (State and Commonwealth). These include but are not limited to the Dja Dja Wurrung Corporation, Country Fire Authority (CFA), Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR), service providers (e.g. Telstra, Powercor) and landholders.

The federal and state policy frameworks that have relevance to roadside management include:

- *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994*
- *Road Management Act 2004*
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999*
- *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987*
- *Bushfire Royal Commission Final Report Recommendations 2009*
- *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*
- *Heritage Act 1995*

2.3 Achieving a balance in roadside management

Proper management of roadsides demands multiple objectives to be fulfilled. There are tensions between often competing objectives of road and roadside management and stakeholders have different views on how best to manage these conflicts.

Council's Roadside Management Plan will provide direction on how to achieve a balance between stakeholder perspectives.

Roadside management aims to:

- **Protect and enhance the safe and efficient function of rural roads** – with attention to drainage and sight lines
- **Protect and enhance the function and values of rural roadsides** – with attention to preserving environmental and heritage values

- **Manage risks on roadsides** – with attention to weed invasion, pest animals, utility and services provision, fire prevention and road maintenance
- **Meet Council’s legislative responsibilities** – with attention to multiple Acts of Parliament to do with a range of matters, for example, native vegetation protection, fire prevention, emergency management and road safety
- **Promote the value and function of roadsides to the community** – through education on matters including timber removal for firewood, grazing and droving of livestock.

2.4 Goals of roadside management in Loddon Shire

Figure 4 outlines the strategic context of the Roadside Management Plan. This includes the four goals for roadside management and the associated actions areas, as well as alignment to the sustainability strategic objective documented in the Loddon Shire Council Plan 2017-2021.

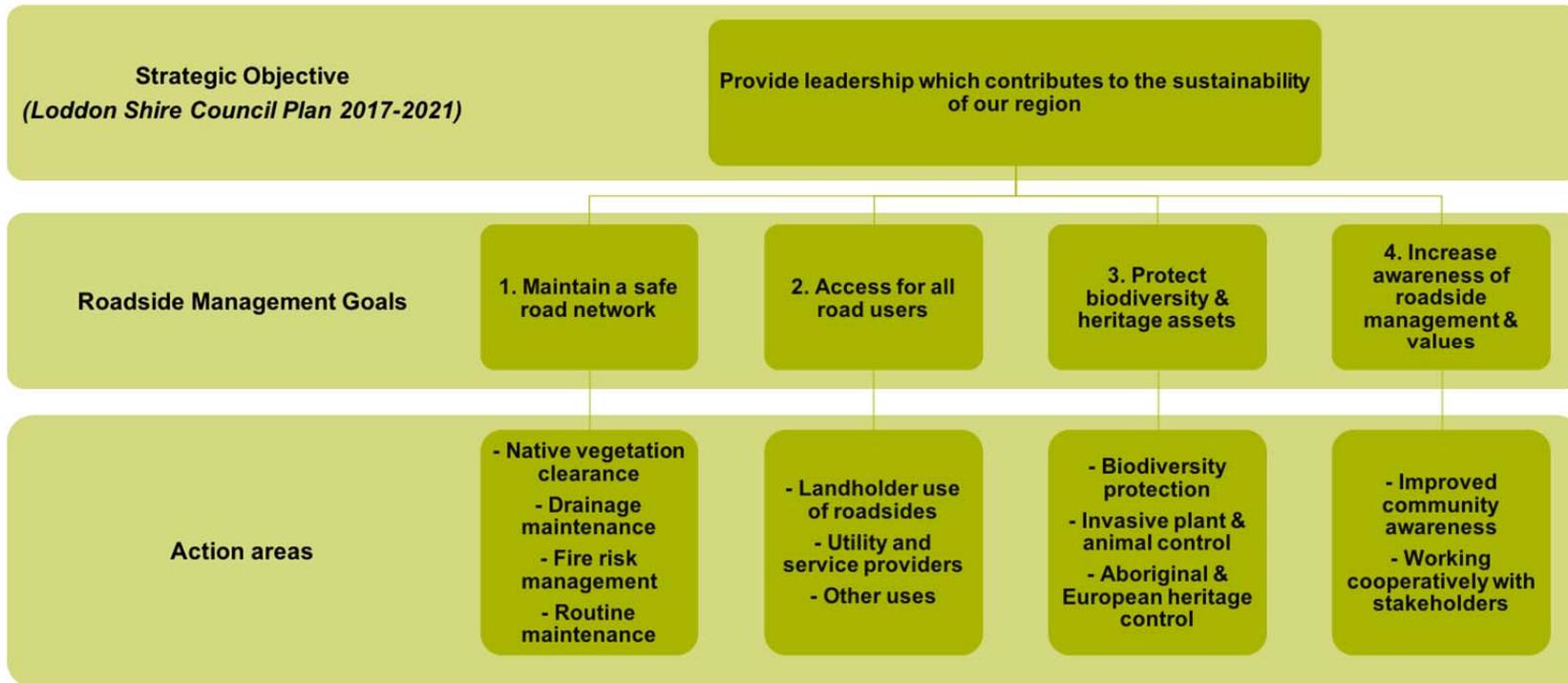


Figure 4: Strategic context of the Roadside Management Plan

PART C: GOALS OF ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT

3 GOAL 1: MAINTAIN A SAFE ROAD NETWORK



Goal: Roadsides are well maintained and safe for all road users, while retaining and enhancing conservation, cultural heritage and other values.

Above: There is an extensive network of un-sheeted low hierarchy roads in the shire

Right: Best practice unsealed road grading is essential to maintain a safe and functional network.



3.1 Introduction

The Loddon Shire Council is committed to ensuring that local roads meet designated quality and performance standards and provides service levels (in terms of safety and efficiency) that meet the needs of the community. Road maintenance standards vary across the network according to risk and design factors including: nature and volume of traffic, operating speed, susceptibility of assets to deterioration, cost effectiveness of repairs, and competing priorities for funding. Such standards are outlined in the Council's Road Management Plan.

Council's Road Management Plan defines the road hierarchy, categorising the local road network into five road types: unformed roads; formed roads; gravel minor; access roads and collector roads. This categorisation helps to further prioritise the frequency of works on roads. For example, high use roads such as access and collector roads are inspected for maintenance twice annually, compared to once a year on gravel minor roads.

To continue and improve the maintenance of a safe road network, Council has identified the following four focus areas:

1. Native vegetation clearance
2. Drainage maintenance
3. Fire risk management
4. Routine maintenance

The following sections present the context and action plan for each focus area. Council has also identified a list of guidelines that will direct Council, agency stakeholders and the community in the delivery of the actions and assist to minimise the overall risk to maintaining a safe road network.

3.2 Native vegetation clearance

3.2.1 Context

Native vegetation removal to maintain a safe road network is regulated through Councils local planning scheme. Section 12.01 of the Victorian Planning Provisions provides an overarching policy framework for native vegetation management. Conservation of biodiversity across Victoria is 'tenure blind' making it relevant and of concern for all levels of government, and private individuals and organisations. The objectives for local planning authorities include:

- Avoid and minimise significant impacts, including cumulative impacts, of land use and development on Victoria's biodiversity.
- Consider the impacts of any change in land-use or development that may affect biodiversity value of adjoining national parks, conservation reserves or nationally and internationally significant sites.
- Assist in the protection and management of sites containing high value biodiversity.
- Assist in the re-establishment of links between isolated habitat remnants that contain high value biodiversity.
- Avoid the removal of native vegetation that makes a significant contribution to Victoria's biodiversity.
- Where native vegetation is permitted to be removed, consider providing an offset in a manner that contributes to Victoria's biodiversity that is equivalent to the contribution made by the native vegetation removed.

Under section 52.17 of the Victorian Planning Provisions, a planning permit is required to remove, destroy or lop native vegetation, unless a relevant exemption applies. Refer to Loddon Shire's planning scheme for guidance:

<http://planningschemes.dpcd.vic.gov.au/schemes/loddon>

Adjoining landholders and others working on the roadside must contact Council to determine permit requirements before removing or trimming native vegetation on the roadside.

Council also manages native vegetation removal on roadsides in accordance with the planning permit process for major capital works projects that involve native vegetation removal. Currently there is no agreement between Loddon Shire Council and the DELWP for Council to access the 'Local government Public Road Exemptions'. This agreement allows municipalities to undertake limited clearing of native vegetation for defined maintenance and safety treatments.

There are two main areas of roadside maintenance where native vegetation removal is periodically required to maintain a safe road network. This includes drainage maintenance and the maintenance of sight lines.

One of the main issues in Loddon Shire is the interpretation of the exemption relating to the removal of native vegetation to accommodate the construction or maintenance of a fence line. There is a role for Council to establish a consistent approach to the interpretation of this exemption. At the time of writing this Plan, the Victorian government is undertaking a native vegetation regulatory review which should provide clarity around exemptions from permit requirements.

3.2.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 1: Strategic actions for vegetation clearance

No.	Action
1.1	Council will establish a clear and consistent approach to the interpretation and communication of legislation relating to native vegetation removal and exemptions for the construction and maintenance of fences.
1.2	Council will consider the appropriateness of entering into a written agreement with DELWP for access the 'Local Government Public Road Exemptions' for permitted native vegetation clearing for the purposes of maintenance and safety works.

Table 2: Guidelines for native vegetation clearance

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
The Loddon Planning Scheme (Clause 52.17 of the Victorian Planning Provisions) requires a permit to be obtained for the removal of native vegetation from a roadside (unless an exemption applies as listed in Clause 52.17.7 of the Victorian Planning Provisions).	All
In addition to the native vegetation retention controls in the Planning Scheme, Vegetation Protection Overlay 2 (VPO2) applies to significant roadside and corridor vegetation in the Shire. For details of where VPO2 applies, check the Loddon Planning Scheme. The purpose of the overlay is to protect and enhance roadside native vegetation and corridors of native vegetation. Under VPO2 a permit is required to remove any native vegetation.	All
Where significant native vegetation has been identified as presenting safety concerns, treatment options taking to account risk management approaches and budgetary factors are to be considered	Council
Council staff will apply the concepts of asset value and risk to determine the most appropriate means of controlling vegetation in drains.	Council

3.3 Drainage maintenance

3.3.1 Context

The growth of native and exotic vegetation in table drains is impacting the proper drainage function along some roads in the Shire. This issue has become more pronounced in the years since the prolonged drought, where previously the need for drainage maintenance was reduced due to the suppressed growth of vegetation. Since that time both exotic and native vegetation has re-established in table drains, requiring a higher level of maintenance in order to remain operable.

The main drainage maintenance issues are:

- **Blocked drains and outlets due to excessive vegetative growth (mostly exotic grasses)** – leading to poor function, ponding of water and impact to sightlines.
- **Native vegetation in drains** – the removal of native vegetation is subject to State government native vegetation controls.
- **Road safety** – is compromised when roads deteriorate due to poor drainage (potholes in the surface, steep edge breaks and shoulder damage).
- **Draining onto roadsides** – from adjoining land cannot be accommodated when drains are not operating effectively.
- **Impact to private land** – associated with drainage into adjoining properties which is impeded due to farming activities or inadequate maintenance.

3.3.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 3: Strategic actions for drainage maintenance

No.	Action
1.3	Council will work with the key agencies and within the relevant legislation to prioritise and seek to fund roadside drainage works.
1.4	Council will regularly review the road hierarchy and acceptable maintenance levels in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004
1.5	Council will work with landholders to minimise any negative impacts of road drainage.

Table 4: Guidelines for drainage maintenance

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Design road drainage systems to maximise pavement life and minimise environmental impact. Ensure that suitably qualified or experienced staffs undertake design of road drainage systems.	Council
Develop and extend education programs for improved works practices to those designing, constructing and maintaining road drainage systems. Training road and civil engineers in hydrological processes may also be of advantage to road managing authorities.	Council
Initiate discussions with local landholders to develop a cooperative approach to management of runoff from road surfaces and associated drainage systems.	Council

3.4 Fire risk management

3.4.1 Context

Increased fire risk is associated with persistent low rainfall and the occurrence of hot dry conditions, coupled with depleted water supplies in communities. These conditions are known to occur in the Loddon Shire, particularly during the summer and autumn months.

Under Section 43 of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* it is Council's responsibility to 'take all practicable steps to prevent the occurrence of fires on, and minimise the danger of the spread of fires on any road under its care and management'.

It is a legislative requirement that Council prepares and maintains a Municipal Fire Management Plan. The current Plan outlines areas of responsibility between stakeholders and documents a fire risk strategy for the municipality.

Following the hearings at the 2009 Victorian Bush Fires Royal Commission, new guidelines were developed namely, *Roadside Fire Management Works: CFA guidelines and procedures (CFA 2010)* provide a process for brigades and CFA Areas to follow when planning non-emergency roadside fire management works. They are intended to assist those with a legal responsibility to maintain roads, by providing advice and information on planning effective roadside fire management.

A draft *Strategic Fire Control Lines (SFCLs)* report is being prepared by the Loddon-Mallee Regional Fire Management Planning Committee (CFA) and identifies a series of roads that provide the greatest opportunities for fuel modification on roadsides and provide a strategic opportunity to slow the spread of a bushfire. The roads have been designated as primary or secondary SFCLs. Within Loddon Shire, one primary SFCL and 17 secondary SFCLs have been identified, covering a total distance of 395km. The report provides standards for the maintenance of primary and secondary SFCLs.

The main issues relating to fire risk management include:

- **Increased fuel load** – on roadsides contributes to an increased risk of fire ignition. Grassy weeds are typically the cause of increased fuel loads.
- **Native vegetation** – such as grassland species benefit from low intensity burning to maintain biodiversity.
- **Fire prevention is a shared responsibility** – that requires cooperation between Council, all roadside users, the CFA and adjoining land managers/owners.
- **Fire prevention works** – such as grazing, slashing, spraying, maintaining fire breaks and cleaning up fallen timber, can negatively impact on native vegetation and habitat values.
- **Differences in opinion** – about how to best maintain roads as ‘relatively safe corridors’ in the event of wildfire (e.g. to reduce fuel loads, burning is preferable over spraying which adversely impacts on native species and can lead to weed infestations which can subsequently increase fuel loads).

3.4.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 5: Strategic actions for fire risk management

No.	Action
1.6	Council will review it’s roadside slashing program to consider appropriate timing and frequency to reduce the fuel load.
1.7	Council will work with the relevant agencies to identify opportunities for strategic fuel management, such as fuel reduction burning that caters for environmental values.
1.8	Council will work with all interested parties, especially landowners, CFA and DELWP to develop a more cooperative approach to fire prevention.
1.9	Council will review the need for strategic firebreaks and where suitable, considered controlled arrangements for landholders to reduce fuel loads on some low conservation value roadsides.

Table 6: Guidelines for fire risk management

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Strategic fire preparedness	
Roads designated as primary and secondary Strategic Fire Control Lines are to be managed in accordance with the standards identified in the draft <i>Strategic Fire Control Lines</i> report (2017).	Council, CFA
Other roads across the shire have works carried out by council, agencies and brigades, which relate to fire suppression activities and various road management	Council, CFA

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
functions. Works are contained within the council or agencies road management maintenance program schedules.	
Adjoining landholder preparedness	
Mowing or slashing of grasses on roadsides in a safe manner not less than 10 centimetres does not require statutory approvals	All
Earthworks including ploughing and grading is not permitted on roadsides without the required statutory approvals	All
It is Councils preferred option that ploughed or graded fire breaks along fence lines be constructed on the adjacent private land and not on the road reserve.	All
Unauthorised fuel reduction burns are not permitted on road reserves	All

3.5 Routine maintenance

3.5.1 Context

Unsealed road grading, maintaining drainage and the maintenance of sight lines along roadsides is a routine practice. During high rainfall years there are high growth rates in roadside vegetation that require additional maintenance to restore sight distances and clearance to ensure the safety of road users. For example, prolific exotic grass growth and a need for trimming and removal of overhanging branches.

It is important that routine road works have a minimal impact on roadsides. In particular, the use of heavy machinery and the importation and storage of road materials can have a serious effect on native roadside vegetation.

The main issues relating to routine maintenance include:

- **Damage to native vegetation** – from spoil (from grading or drainage maintenance) pushed over native vegetation
- **Excessive vegetative growth** – in table drains and along roadsides, particularly following high rainfall, can inhibit sight lines.
- **Road safety across the local network** – is compromised when design sight distances and safe clearance are not maintained through timely trimming or removal of roadside vegetation.
- **Driveway and other access points** – need to be maintained to ensure safe entry and exit from the carriageway.

3.5.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 7. Strategic actions for routine maintenance

No.	Action
1.10	Council will undertake routine maintenance and construction with minimal impact to roadside values, including native roadside vegetation.
1.11	Council will make training available to road maintenance crews on best practice unsealed road grading techniques.

Table 8: Guidelines for routine maintenance

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
All works programs on roadsides are to be conducted in accordance with best practices outlined in the VicRoads Roadside Management Strategy (2011) and the Loddon Road Management Plan for inspection, maintenance and repair of roads and road related infrastructure.	Council
The storage of road materials should not adversely affect roadside vegetation and pest plants or pathogens are not to be imported and spread.	Council
Guidelines for vehicle hygiene and importation and storage of road materials are included in works specifications.	Council
Excess materials from road excavation should only be stockpiled in designated stack sites.	Council

4 GOAL 2: ACCESS FOR ALL ROAD USERS



Goal: Access is provided for all road users in accordance with relevant legislative requirements and with minimal impact to conservation and other values.

4.1 Introduction

There are several groups of stakeholders (other than Council) that access and use local roadsides. These include:

- Landholders – livestock droving, machinery movement, access to properties, cattle underpasses.
- Utility service providers and their contractors – installation and maintenance of services (electricity, telecommunications, water, sewage and gas).
- Other transport providers – passenger and freight rail infrastructure, school bus operators.
- Fire and other emergency services – access to properties and front line control.
- Other users – roadside trails (designated or not) used by walkers, cyclists, horse riders.

Unauthorised and uncontrolled works in road reserves can have serious risks. Some of the risks that require managing include:

- Safety issues – for example, utility providers, fire and other emergency personnel, road works crews need a safe working environment, risks can be mitigated by appropriate signage and following other protocols.

- Native vegetation disturbance – for example, clearing and soil disturbance by utility providers and farmers maintaining boundary fences; risks can be minimised by issuing of relevant permits and working within codes of practices.
- Ease of access – for example, utility providers will need to maintain assets routinely, provide access to emergency services and farmers need to be able to move increasingly large machinery.
- Bushfire preparedness – for example, roadside works conducted by CFA and property owners to reduce fuel loads on roadsides to minimise risk to life and property.
- Roadside revegetation activities – for example, guidelines need to be followed on appropriate species being planted or direct seeded and setback to preserve sightlines.

Effective communication and consultation with all roadside users and Council will minimise risks and the frequency of unauthorised works. Third party users need to obtain planning permission and/or consent from Council and comply with a range of state and federal government laws when working on roadsides.

Council has identified the following focus areas to help ensure access is provided for all road users in accordance with relevant legislative requirements and with minimal impact to conservation and other values:

1. Landholder use of roadsides
2. Utility and service providers
3. Other transport providers
4. Other users

The following sections present the context and action plan for each focus area. Council has identified a list of guidelines that will direct Council, agency stakeholders and the community in the delivery of the actions and assist to minimise the overall risk to providing access for all users.

4.2 Landholder use of roadsides

4.2.1 Context

Roadsides across Loddon Shire traverse rural agricultural land, and are often highly valued by landholders to support the movement of stock, grazing, cropping, to move machinery and allow access to maintain fence lines. This in turn places pressure on roadsides and exposes them to threats such as the spread of weeds, removal and damage of native vegetation and soil disturbance.

The main issues relating to landholder use of roadsides include:

- **Stock movement or grazing** – when poorly timed or managed, grazing can cause ground disturbance and compaction, weed, pathogen and disease spread, increased nutrient levels, and loss or damage to native vegetation.
- **Cropping** – conducted by private landholders or as a community fund raising activity along Council managed roadsides.
- **Machinery movement** – trimming and removal of native vegetation/trees on some roadsides to allow heavy vehicle and farm machinery access.
- **Maintenance of fence lines** – works to construct or repair fence lines can present a high risk of damage to native vegetation, in particular where there is clearing required, dumping of slashed material occurs or there is use of machinery on the roadside.

4.2.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 9: Strategic actions for landholder use of roadsides

No.	Action
2.1	Council will work to ensure that landholders are aware that State planning provisions apply to activities that remove, lop or destroy native vegetation on roadsides and that landholders must contact Council and access relevant approvals prior to undertaking any removals.
2.2	Council will work with local landholders and the relevant stakeholders to determine the suitability of cropping to occur on Council managed five chain roadsides within low conservation areas for the purpose of fund raising for community groups and sporting clubs.
2.3	In consultation with farmers, Council will consider developing strategic routes for machinery movement that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid high conservation status roadsides • Allow for the least vegetation destruction on a local basis.

Table 10: Guidelines for landholder use of roadsides

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
<i>Livestock in roadsides</i>	
All livestock on roadsides are governed by Loddon Shire Local Law No 5 Livestock Local Law. http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Our-documents/Local-laws/Local-Law-5-Livestock	All
<i>Cropping</i>	
Council recognises that in a limited number of situations cropping may be an appropriate use of the roadside reserve on five chain (100m) roads. Any cropping of roadsides will only be undertaken subject to environmental impact assessment and development of a robust governance framework, and where there is economic benefit that flows to Shire based community groups and sporting clubs. Cropping is not permitted on other Council managed roads outside of the above requirements and conditions.	Council, landholders
<i>Machinery movement</i>	
Landholders are permitted to move machinery from one paddock to another, without a permit in a safe manner.	Landholders
<i>Fencing construction and maintenance</i>	
Landholders must consult with their neighbour prior to removing any native vegetation for fence line maintenance or construction. A neighbour may include Council, State government or a private landholder.	Landholders
Vegetation clearance can be undertaken to construct or maintain fences along roadsides provided it does not exceed a combined total width of 4m (DELWP 2017). https://www.environment.vic.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/91251/Exemptions-from-requiring-a-planning-permit-to-remove,-destroy-or-lop-native-vegetation-Guidance.pdf	All
Works and machinery operation must be conducted from the property owner's side of the fence.	Landholders
Landholders only require a permit from Council if they need to work directly within the road reserve.	
Any fencing construction and maintenance waste generated from the works must not be left on the roadside reserve.	All

4.3 Utility and service providers

4.3.1 Context

Service providers include all utility companies that distribute communications, water sewer, electricity and gas services. Consultation with Council is required before undertaking any works related to installation or maintenance of services (except in an emergency). Wherever practical, utilities are encouraged to locate services on low conservation value rural roadsides or cleared land adjacent to roadsides. Under the Victorian *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, the *Planning and Environment Act* and the Australian government's *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*, public authorities must have regard to fauna and flora conservation and management objectives, attain the necessary approvals including native vegetation offsets if required.

Communication between service providers and Council must be clear and effective to ensure the objectives of good roadside management are met. Utility companies are required to obtain a planning permit when undertaking new works. Some exemptions are permissible under Clause 52.17 of the Victorian Planning Provisions in relation to the removal of native vegetation to maintain or construct utility services.

The main utility and service provision issues are:

- **Impact to biodiversity** – caused by soil disturbance and native vegetation clearing from the maintenance and installation of utility services.
- **Communication between Council and service providers** – to ensure the best outcomes for protection of natural and heritage assets on roadsides.
- **Working within an identified code of practice** – that is followed by all service providers, with Council notified of planned works on local roadsides.

4.3.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 11: Strategic actions for utility and service providers

No.	Action
2.4	Council will encourage utility and service providers to adopt route selection that avoids the road reserve wherever possible, in particular significant flora and fauna, and sites of cultural or heritage significance.
2.5	Council will investigate the opportunity to preferentially engage contractors that have appropriate environmental training and will provide contractors access to information on roadside conservation values where available.

Table 12: Guidelines for utility and service providers

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
All utility service providers must receive written consent from Council to conduct routine and capital works in Council roadside reserves. A planning permit may also be required for removal of native vegetation.	Utility and service providers
Collaboration between Council and utility providers to ensure that all works are undertaken in accordance with their relevant codes of practice.	Council, utility and service providers
Contractors to have appropriate environmental training and given access to mapping information on roadside conservation values where available.	Council
In high conservation value areas or areas with special management requirements, site specific management plans must be prepared in consultation with all interested parties. These management plans may include alteration to the standard pruning cycle.	All

It is Council's expectation that roadside reserves are left in the condition in which they were found and if damage occurs, rehabilitation works will be required at the utility service provider's expense.	Utility and service providers
Use pruning material from vegetation removal appropriately: wood chips and mulch can be spread on the roadside to a depth up to 50mm.	Contractors

4.4 Other uses

4.4.1 Context

Roadsides are valued and used for a range of other activities, including recreation by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and others. This includes the use of both formal and informal trails. The main issues associated with recreational use of roadsides include:

- **Safety** – visibility of users and separation from vehicle movements, as well as safety from hidden obstacles e.g. rocks in tall grass, holes left by road or utility maintenance crews.
- **Improved access** – roadsides provide an underutilised resource, which could be better developed and incorporated into existing trail networks.

Roadsides have been used as a source of firewood, soil and gravel for road works and other activities. These activities, in some instances, have resulted in disturbance to roadside vegetation and removal of earthen resources can create erosion problems.

4.4.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 13: Strategic actions for other users

No.	Action
2.6	Council will support new and existing recreational opportunities on roadside reserves that do not negatively impact on roadside values, and ensure user safety.
2.7	Council will make information available to the community of any other permitted third party uses on the roadside.

Table 14: Guidelines for other users

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Firewood	
Council does not currently issue permits for the collection of firewood on roadside reserves.	All
Sand, soil and gravel extraction	
Extraction of soil, sand or gravel from roadsides by individuals other than local council is not permitted.	All
Council should not establish a borrow pit by extraction of sand, soil and gravel on roadsides of high conservation value.	Council
Council staff responsible for gravel, sand and soil extraction must take precautions to minimise the spread of noxious weeds. For example, adopting appropriate vehicle hygiene practices.	Council

5 GOAL 3: PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND HERITAGE ASSETS



Goal: Roadside reserves with high biodiversity and/or cultural heritage significance are valued, protected and enhanced.



5.1 Introduction

Loddon Shire Council recognises the important biodiversity and heritage values that occur on roadsides across the municipality, and are committed to their protection. Protecting biodiversity and cultural heritage values on roadsides is important because:

- Some of the last remaining examples of high quality remnant native vegetation can only be found on roadsides.
- Roadsides can contain significant Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal sites and artefacts.
- Many rare and threatened flora and fauna species rely on the habitat provided in roadside reserves.
- Roadsides provide vegetated corridors which support the movement of fauna species.
- There are opportunities to connect isolated patches of remnant vegetation (such as stands on private land and in public reserves) with roadsides, thus increase the critical mass and connectedness of native vegetation across the landscape.
- Roadside vegetation provides significant amenity and rural landscape values.

To protect biodiversity and heritage assets on roadsides, Council has identified three areas of focus:

1. Biodiversity protection
2. Invasive plant and animal control
3. Aboriginal and European Heritage protection

The following sections present the context and action plan for each focus area. In addition, Council has also identified a list of guidelines that will direct Council, agency stakeholders and the community in the delivery of the actions and assist to minimise the overall risk to biodiversity and heritage values on roadsides.

5.2 Biodiversity protection

5.2.1 Context

Biodiversity collectively refers to the variety of plants, animals and micro-organisms and the ecosystems of which they are a part. Biodiversity is largely underpinned by the quality and extent of native vegetation, which supports healthy land and water, diverse flora and fauna and fosters community health and well-being.

Importantly, native vegetation provides critical habitat for many listed rare and threatened species known to occur in the Shire. This includes species and ecological communities listed under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*. For example, Plains Grassland and Plains Grassy Woodland ecological communities are listed as critically endangered and a matter of national environmental significance under the *EPBC Act 1999*.

Today, the North Central region of Victoria is one of Australia's most highly cleared and fragmented landscapes (NCCMA 2013). The legacy of past actions such as vegetation removal and overgrazing, has led to a rapid and significant decline in the extent and condition of native vegetation, and the loss of biodiversity. Outside larger State managed public land areas, the last remaining patches of intact remnant native vegetation exist on roadsides.

Threatening processes continue to compromise the extent and integrity of the remaining areas of native vegetation in the Shire, and include weed and pest animal invasion, vegetation clearance, changes in natural fire regimes, altered hydrology, soil disturbance and climate change. In addition to these processes, there are other activities that have a specific impact on roadside vegetation and include:

- Spraying herbicides
- Ploughing and grading firebreaks
- Spreading weeds by machinery
- Installation and maintenance of services
- Grazing by livestock
- Road upgrade and realignment
- Unauthorised firewood collection
- Rubbish dumping
- Cropping and ploughing, particularly in remnant grassland areas.

Significant attention and effort is therefore required to protect and enhance the remaining areas of high quality, intact native vegetation including that found along roadsides. This is in line with the

North Central CMA’s regional objective to “maintain current extent and condition of remnant habitat (NCCMA, 2013)”.

In 2008 the North Central CMA mapped the conservation value of roadside vegetation across the region, including Loddon Shire. High conservation value roadsides feature species that are endangered, rare, vulnerable or depleted. The roadside condition is near natural or has moderate disturbance, and the majority of the roadside is of high conservation value. The roadsides are of significant value because they often contain the only remaining example of these vegetation and habitat types in an otherwise cleared landscape. They can also contain very high numbers of threatened flora and fauna species, and provide vital linkages and networks for species movement (NCCMA 2010).

THE MAIN BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION ISSUES ARE:

- **Roadsides support biodiversity values – including threatened species and ecological communities that are protected under various State and Commonwealth legislation.**
- **Conservation values are mapped – but the mapping is coarse and not in a useable format for all roadside users. Condition changes are not monitored.**
- **Intrusion of weeds and rabbits – onto roadsides from adjoining private and public reserves.**
- **Poor communication of biodiversity values – to Council staff, stakeholders and the community.**
- **Roadside maintenance practices – need to be undertaken in a manner that minimises disturbance to indigenous vegetation and spread of weeds.**
- **Utility and service provision – can cause incremental damage due to excessive soil disturbance and vegetation clearing.**
- **Roadside use by adjoining landholders – for example, for grazing, moving stock, vehicles and machinery can adversely impact biodiversity values.**

5.2.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 15: Strategic actions for biodiversity protection

No.	Action
3.1	Council will investigate opportunities to employ an Environment Officer dedicated to the management of biodiversity assets in the Shire, including roadside reserves.
3.2	Council will investigate opportunities to update the roadside conservation mapping in consultation with the relevant agencies and will make it accessible to all Council staff.
3.3	Council will take steps to ensure the adoption of best practices by works crews and contractors to avoid and/or minimise disturbance to native vegetation, and identify opportunities for field staff training such as native vegetation and weed identification.
3.4	Council will work with adjoining landholders and Landcare to support appropriate revegetation/regeneration on roadsides or on adjoining properties, and where it enhances existing roadside corridors.

Table 16: Guidelines for biodiversity protection

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Landholders, community groups, contractors and others planning to conduct works on a road reserve (e.g. seed collection and revegetation) must attain a permit from Council as the land manager unless exempted by relevant Act.	All
For revegetation projects, use only indigenous species of the appropriate vegetation type (Ecological Vegetation Class) for roadside revegetation, except on low conservation value roadsides where written consent is provided by Council officers.	All

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Preference should be given to those projects that enhance the quality of remnant vegetation, provide linkages with other remnants or enhance threatened species habitat.	All
Revegetation works on roadsides must not compromise public safety or road and utility assets. Appropriate setback distances need to be applied from both the road formation, fence line and utilities.	All

5.3 Invasive plant and animal control

5.3.1 Context

Invasive plants and animals threaten biodiversity by competing for natural resources and the loss of habitat for native species. Invasive plants can also displace native species and provide harbor for invasive animals (NCCMA 2013). They also present threats to primary production, recreation and amenity in Loddon Shire.

All land managers and members of the community have a role to play in controlling weeds in the Shire. DEDJTR (Agriculture Victoria) takes the lead role for invasive plant and animal management on most private land in the state, while DELWP has the lead role on public land, particularly for the management of parks and reserves in Victoria through Parks Victoria. Under the *Catchment and Land Protection Act 1994 (CaLP Act)*, Council as a land manager has a legal responsibility to take all reasonable steps to eradicate regionally prohibited weeds and prevent the growth and spread of regionally controlled weeds in its own parks and reserves, and this includes roadsides.

In 2013, the *CaLP Act 1994* was amended to require Councils to develop Roadside Weed and Rabbit Control Plans in accordance with the then Department of Primary Industries (DPI) guidelines. The Plan identifies control measures for target species on roadsides, including rabbits, Wheel Cactus (*Opuntia robusta*) and Paterson's Curse (*Echium plantagineum*). The extent to which Council has been able to continue its involvement in this area has been significantly reliant on State funding, and this remains a key constraint at present.

The North Central CMA *Invasive Plants and Animals Strategy (2010)* identifies roadsides as being particularly susceptible to impacts from invasive plants and animals, which can directly threaten the quality and viability of roadside vegetation.

When an invasive species is abundant and widespread, the most cost effective approach is to protect priority assets. Assets include things like recreational parkland, water frontages, wetlands, areas of agricultural land, parks with high cultural or historical significance or stands of intact native vegetation. Adopting an asset protection approach means that priorities can be set among the many Council managed assets threatened by invasive plants and animals.

THE MAIN INVASIVE PLANT AND ANIMAL ISSUES ARE:

- Spread of weeds – which occurs through several processes including Council maintenance works, quarry materials and movement of vehicles and machinery.
- Management of weeds (control and prevention) is a shared responsibility – that requires cooperation between all roadside users, roadside managers and adjoining land managers.
- Roadsides are high risk – due to their exposure to adjoining land use practices and infestation from passing road transport and construction vehicles.
- Pest plant and animal control practices – need to be undertaken in a manner that minimises disturbance to indigenous vegetation and spread of weeds.
- Weeds posing road management risks – the spread of weeds can lead to higher maintenance requirements and a heightened fire and road safety risk.
- Developing a more strategic approach to weed control – according to a risk and asset value rating; firstly targeting new and emerging high risk weeds and then the protection of high value assets such as high conservation value roadsides.

5.3.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 17: Strategic actions for invasive plant and animal control

No.	Action
3.5	Council will seek opportunities to form partnerships with the Landcare networks and other landholder groups and agencies (e.g. Parks Victoria and DELWP) to develop a more prioritised and cooperative approach to weed control and prevention.
3.6	Council will seek funding to map roadside weed infestations and use this data to inform weed management treatment in partnership with community groups and relevant agencies (e.g. Parks Victoria and DELWP)
3.7	Council maintenance crews will be trained in weed identification and best management techniques that prevent the spread of weeds.
3.8	Council will collaborate with utility providers to ensure that all works are undertaken in accordance with their relevant codes of practice, especially in relation to vehicle hygiene practices to minimise the spread of weeds.
3.9	Council will investigate the opportunity to review the existing <i>Works within a Road Reserve</i> permit process to encourage landholder participation in best practice weed management on roadsides.
3.10	Council will maintain their participation in the Loddon Weed Management Committee.

Table 18. Guidelines for invasive plant and animal control

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Isolated pest plant control measures with the use of chemical application using rope-wick and spot spraying does not require <i>Works within a Road Reserve</i> permit on Council managed roads and is the preferred method when controlling weeds on roadsides.	All
Use of boom spray is only permitted after seeking advice from DELWP and obtaining any statutory approvals that may be required.	
Only approved chemicals used in accordance with their label are to be used along with the inclusion of dye to identify sprayed areas.	All
To reduce off-target damage, spot spraying of grasses and herbs and cut and paint, or drill and fill woody weeds, should be undertaken wherever practicable.	All
Weeds to be sprayed during the right season such as prior to seed set and at appropriate growing times whenever possible.	All
Maintain records of chemicals sprayed, location and date of spraying, weather conditions, target species and monitor success.	All

5.4 ABORIGINAL AND EUROPEAN HERITAGE PROTECTION

5.4.1 Context

Roadsides can contain sites or artefacts with significant cultural value for either Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal communities. Registered Aboriginal Parties must be advised of any proposed works that may affect Aboriginal sites, and under certain circumstances a Cultural Heritage Management Plan may be required under the *Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006*.

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC) is the Registered Aboriginal Party that covers the majority of the Loddon Shire. In 2013, DDWCAC entered into a Recognition and Settlement Agreement with the Victorian Government, which formally recognises the Dja Dja Wurrung people as the traditional owners for part of Central Victoria. The agreement applies to all Crown Land in the agreement area, including roadside reserves. It includes the first Land Use Activity Agreement (LUAA) which creates a new and simplified process for managing activities on public land that may have an impact on the rights of the Dja Dja Wurrung people. It also allows the Dja Dja Wurrung the opportunity to have a say or consent to certain activities on Crown land (Victorian State Government, 2016).

Additionally, all significant non-Aboriginal historical sites are protected under the Victorian *Heritage Act 1995*. Examples of European historical sites along roadsides in Loddon Shire include significant trees, monuments or built relics that provide an important connection to the past.

The Loddon Shire Council Planning Scheme includes a Heritage Overlay that applies to some, but not all, significant Aboriginal and European sites, places and objects.

An understanding of the legislative and reporting requirements, consultation, planning and risk assessment must be undertaken to avoid harm to heritage assets and values.

THE MAIN ABORIGINAL AND EUROPEAN HERITAGE PROTECTION ISSUES ARE:

- **Roadsides include significant cultural heritage sites – that are protected under State and Commonwealth legislation.**
- **Need for a permit or a management plan – an Aboriginal cultural heritage permit is required if an activity will, or is likely to, harm Aboriginal cultural heritage. An Aboriginal cultural heritage management plan is required if the roadside work is in an area of cultural heritage sensitivity and is a high impact activity that is not an exempt activity. Consultation with the Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation may be required for roadside activities in accordance with the Land Use Activity Agreement.**
- **Routine maintenance – may impact on known registered or previously unknown and unregistered heritage sites and places**
- **Utility and service provision and maintenance – may also harm heritage sites and places**
- **An absence of protocols and effective communication – on appropriate management of heritage sites and Aboriginal places by various stakeholders.**

5.4.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 19: Strategic actions for Aboriginal and European heritage protection

No.	Action
3.11	Council will encourage staff, contractors and all roadside users to consult the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage registers (the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register and the Victorian Heritage Register) for information about any on-site cultural heritage prior to working on the roadside to avoid harm to sites of heritage significance.
3.12	Council will work with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation to determine the most appropriate implementation of the Land Use Activity Agreement as it applies to roadsides.
3.13	Council will increase awareness on established processes for the identification, reporting and management of Aboriginal places, in accordance with relevant legislation on roadsides in the Shire.
3.14	Council will fully implement established processes for the identification, reporting and management of Aboriginal places, in accordance with relevant legislation on roadsides in the Shire (e.g. Cultural Heritage Management Plan and Land Use Activity Agreement)

Table 20: Guidelines for Aboriginal and European heritage protection

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Contact Aboriginal Victoria and/or Heritage Victoria if a potential new archaeological site is identified.	All
Contact Aboriginal Victoria and Heritage Victoria if any construction, maintenance or other activity will impact sites of cultural heritage.	All

6 GOAL 4: INCREASE AWARENESS OF ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT AND VALUES



Goal: Better educated stakeholders and community will improve understanding and appreciation of roadside management.



6.1 Introduction

There are many different views and experiences around the value of roadsides and their management, both amongst stakeholder groups and between them. These views typically reflect the interest of stakeholder groups, as well as the experience and training they've had with roadside management.

Differences in the language used by various stakeholders (DELWP, CMA, utility services personnel, CFA, Council staff in different roles, landholders) further complicate the problem and can lead to misunderstandings and confusion.

By implementing education programs to inform stakeholders on different issues relevant to roadside management (for example native species conservation, cultural heritage protection, fire prevention) improved community engagement and understanding of roadside management issues and increased communication between stakeholders can be achieved.

The following sections present the context and action plan for improving community awareness and working cooperatively with stakeholders. Council has also identified guidelines for the implementation of the actions.

6.2 Improved community awareness

6.2.1 Context

Unauthorised and damaging activities can often occur in roadside reserves due to a lack of awareness by third party users and community. Wider promotion of the value of roadsides will discourage damaging practices. Providing accessible information and clear direction will be central to encouraging community involvement and acceptance of best practice roadside management.

The main issues relating to community awareness include:

- **Lack of awareness** – by third party users and community of roadside values can lead to unauthorised works and damaging activities on roadsides.
- **Provision of accessible information** – relating to the management issues, values and roles and responsibilities surrounding roadside management, made available for community.
- **Third party permits** – parties need to be aware of those activities that require a permit e.g. consent for works, livestock permits, and systems need to be in place to issue them.

6.2.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 21: Strategic actions for improved community awareness

No.	Action
4.1	Council will prepare a communication strategy to raise awareness of acceptable and unacceptable practices on roadsides e.g. media campaigns, Roadside Community Handbook, make existing information available.
4.2	Council will identify and advertise a first point of contact for landholders, community members or utility and service providers planning to undertake works on roadsides.

Table 22: Guidelines for improved community awareness

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Council will support, and work with local community particularly Landcare networks and groups, to increase community awareness of the value of roadside reserves.	Council
A Works Within Road Reserve (WWRR) permit must be obtained prior to any works being undertaken on Loddon Shire Council controlled road reserves with the following exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolated pest plant control measures with the use of chemical spot spraying or using rope-wick control methods. • Mowing or slashing of grasses on roadsides to a height not less than 10 centimetres. http://www.loddon.vic.gov.au/Live/Foothpaths-roads-and-drains/Working-within-Council-road-reserve	All

6.3 Working cooperatively with stakeholders

6.3.1 Context

The implementation of this Plan will require coordination and engagement with regional agencies and authorities that have corresponding areas of responsibility. This includes:

Country Fire Authority (CFA)

The CFA is a volunteer and community based organisation that responds to a variety of fire and emergency incidents including wildfires, structure fires and transport related fires. They require access to the local road network at all times and plan and instigate fire prevention works in consultation with Councils' Municipal Fire Prevention officer.

Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation (DDWCAC)

The Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation is the Registered Aboriginal Party that covers the majority of the Loddon Shire.

North Central Catchment Management Authority (NCCMA)

NCCMA is a statutory authority established by the Victorian Government and has a lead role in working with community and Government to enhance land and biodiversity across all land tenure.

Landcare

Landcare is a community-based volunteer organisation focussed on increasing biodiversity and promoting sustainable land management. There is an active and engaged community of Landcare volunteers working across the Loddon Shire.

Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP)

DELWP has responsibility to enhance land, water and biodiversity of State owned land and is Victoria's lead government department for sustainable management of land, water and biodiversity resources, as well as local government planning.

Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR)

DEDJTR encompasses Agriculture Victoria and is responsible for biosecurity including pest plant and animal planning control.

Service providers e.g. Telstra, Powercor and Water Authorities

Service providers include all utility companies that distribute communications, water, electricity and gas services. Consultation with Council is required before undertaking any works related to installation or maintenance of services (except in an emergency).

6.3.2 Action plan and guidelines

Table 23: Strategic actions to working cooperatively with stakeholders

No.	Action
4.3	Council will work with stakeholders e.g. Landcare, DELWP, CMA, CFA and Dja Dja Wurrung to improve understanding of roadside values across the shire and agree on best management practices.

Table 24: Guidelines for working cooperatively with stakeholders

Guidelines	Who is responsible?
Council will support the development of relationships with stakeholders to improve the understanding of roadside values and implement best management practices.	Council

PART D: IMPLEMENTATION

7 THE ACTION PLAN

7.1 Costing and funding of actions

No.	Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
GOAL 1: MAINTAIN A SAFE ROAD NETWORK						
Native vegetation clearance						
1.1	Council will establish a clear and consistent approach to the interpretation and communication of legislation relating to native vegetation removal and exemptions for the construction and maintenance of fences.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
1.2	Council will consider the appropriateness of entering into a written agreement with DELWP for access the 'Local Government Public Road Exemptions' for permitted native vegetation clearing for the purposes of maintenance and safety works.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
Drainage maintenance						
1.3	Council will work with the key agencies and within the relevant legislation to prioritise and seek to fund roadside drainage works.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
1.4	Council will regularly review the road hierarchy and acceptable maintenance levels in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004	Within existing resources	\$0	Within existing resources	Council	Ongoing every 4 years pursuant to the Road Management Act 2004
1.5	Council will work with landholders to minimise any negative impacts of road drainage.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
Fire risk management						
1.6	Council will review its roadside slashing program to consider appropriate timing and frequency to reduce the fuel load.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing

No.	Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
1.7	Council will work with the relevant agencies to identify opportunities for strategic fuel management, such as fuel reduction burning that caters for environmental values.	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	Within existing resources	State Government Grant	Ongoing until 30 June 2020
1.8	Council will work with all interested parties, especially landowners, CFA and DELWP to develop a more cooperative approach to fire prevention.	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	Within existing resources	State Government Grant	Ongoing until 30 June 2020
1.9	Council will review the need for strategic firebreaks and where suitable, considered controlled arrangements for landholders to reduce fuel loads on some low conservation value roadsides.	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00	Within existing resources	State Government Grant	Ongoing until 30 June 2020
Routine maintenance						
1.10	Council will undertake routine maintenance and construction with minimal impact to roadside values, including native roadside vegetation.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
1.11	Council will make training available to road maintenance crews on best practice unsealed road grading techniques	\$10,000.00	\$0	\$10,000.00	Council annual training budget	2019 - 2023
GOAL 2: ACCESS TO ALL ROAD USERS						
Landholder use of roadsides						
2.1	Council will work to ensure that landholders are aware that State planning provisions apply to activities that remove, lop or destroy native vegetation on roadsides and that landholders must contact Council and access relevant approvals prior to undertaking any removals.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
2.2	Council will work with local landholders and the relevant stakeholders to determine the suitability of cropping to occur on Council managed five chain roadsides within low conservation areas for the purpose of fund raising for community groups and sporting clubs.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing

No.	Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
2.3	In consultation with farmers, Council will consider developing strategic routes for machinery movement that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid high conservation status roadsides Allow for the least vegetation destruction on a local basis. 	\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00	\$0	State/Federal Government	Subject to funding
Utility and service providers						
2.4	Council will encourage utility and service providers to adopt route selection that avoids the road reserve wherever possible, in particular significant flora and fauna, and sites of cultural or heritage significance.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
2.5	Council will investigate the opportunity to preferentially engage contractors that have appropriate environmental training and will provide contractors access to information on roadside conservation values where available.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
Other uses						
2.6	Council will support new and existing recreational opportunities on roadside reserves that do not negatively impact on roadside values, and ensure user safety.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
2.7	Council will make information available to the community of any other permitted third party uses on the roadside.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	June 2018
GOAL 3: PROTECT BIODIVERSITY AND HERITAGE ASSETS						
Biodiversity protection						
3.1	Council will investigate opportunities to employ an Environment Officer dedicated to the management of biodiversity assets in the Shire, including roadside reserves.	\$120,000.00 p.a.	\$120,000.00 p.a.	\$0	State/Federal Government Grants	Subject to funding
3.2	Council will investigate opportunities to update the roadside conservation mapping in consultation with the relevant agencies and will make it accessible to all Council staff.	\$55,000.00	\$55,000.00	\$0	State Government Grant	Subject to funding

No.	Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
3.3	Council will take steps to ensure the adoption of best practices by works crews and contractors to avoid and/or minimise disturbance to native vegetation, and identify opportunities for field staff training such as native vegetation and weed identification.	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0	State Government Grant (Roadside weeds and pest management program)	2019/2020
3.4	Council will work with adjoining landholders and Landcare to support appropriate revegetation/regeneration on roadsides or on adjoining properties, and where it enhances existing roadside corridors.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
Invasive plant and animal control						
3.5	Council will seek opportunities to form partnerships with the Landcare networks and other landholder groups and agencies (e.g. Parks Victoria and DELWP) to develop a more prioritised and cooperative approach to weed control and prevention.	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$0	State Government Grant	Subject to funding
3.6	Council will seek funding to map roadside weed infestations and use this data to inform weed management treatment in partnership with community groups and relevant agencies (e.g. Parks Victoria and DELWP)	\$60,000.00	\$60,000.00	\$0	State Government Grant (Roadside weed and pest management program)	2018/2019
3.7	Council maintenance crews will be trained in weed identification and best management techniques that prevent the spread of weeds.	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00	\$0	State Government Grant (Roadside weed and pest management program)	2019/2020
3.8	Council will collaborate with utility providers to ensure that all works are undertaken in accordance with their relevant codes of practice, especially in relation to vehicle hygiene practices to minimise the spread of weeds.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing

No.	Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
3.9	Council will investigate the opportunity to review the existing <i>Works within a Road Reserve</i> permit process to encourage landholder participation in best practice weed management on roadsides.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	As opportunity arise
3.10	Council will maintain their participation in the Loddon Weed Management Committee.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
Aboriginal and European heritage protection						
3.11	Council will encourage staff, contractors and all roadside users to consult the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage registers (the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register and the Victorian Heritage Register) for information about any on-site cultural heritage prior to working on the roadside to avoid harm to sites of heritage significance.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
3.12	Council will work with Dja Dja Wurrung Clans Aboriginal Corporation to determine the most appropriate implementation of the Land Use Activity Agreement as it applies to roadsides.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
3.13	Council will increase awareness on established processes for the identification, reporting and management of Aboriginal places, in accordance with relevant legislation on roadsides in the Shire.	\$20,000.00	\$20,000.00	\$0	Federal Government Grant	Subject to funding
3.14	Council will fully implement established processes for the identification, reporting and management of Aboriginal places, in accordance with relevant legislation on roadsides in the Shire (e.g. Cultural Heritage Management Plan and Land Use Activity Agreement)	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
GOAL 4: INCREASE AWARENESS OF ROADSIDE MANAGEMENT & VALUES						
Improved community awareness						
4.1	Council will prepare a communication strategy to raise awareness of acceptable and unacceptable practices on roadsides e.g.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	June 2018

No.	Action	Cost of project	Total expected funding	Net cost to Council	Proposed funding source	Completion timeframe
	media campaigns, Roadside Community Handbook, make existing information available.					
4.2	Council will identify and advertise a first point of contact for landholders, community members or utility and service providers planning to undertake works on roadsides.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing
Working cooperatively with stakeholders						
4.3	Council will work with stakeholders e.g. Landcare, DELWP, CMA, CFA and Dja Dja Wurrung to improve understanding of roadside values across the shire and agree on best management practices.	N/A	N/A	Within existing resources	N/A	Ongoing

7.2 Monitoring the effectiveness of the plan

The Loddon Shire Council will oversee the implementation of the Roadside Management Plan but will need to work with all stakeholders including government agencies, utility providers and local landholders in the delivery of many of the actions.

Council also have a responsibility to monitor the progress of the actions over time. This will include identifying if the actions are completed on time and within budget, as well their overall effectiveness in contributing to the intended goal. Over time, some actions may no longer be relevant or may need to be adapted to suit new conditions. It is important that a review process is undertaken to allow a level of adaptive management to occur.

It is intended that the Plan will be reviewed regularly, with a more comprehensive review occurring in five years' time (during 2022).

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