

7.5.3 State Projects Update Report

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Recommendation(s)

That Council :

- notes the updates and achievements of the Major projects detailed in this report.
- notes the effectiveness of Cardinia Shire Councils management approach to State Infrastructure projects which focusses on project management and facilitation, advocacy and collaboration across all levels of Government and Stakeholders to maximise projects outcomes, attract new projects/scope and grant funding opportunities.

Attachments

Nil

Executive Summary

The Council's Major Projects Business Unit has played a pivotal role in managing significant projects in collaboration with various State Government agencies. The Victorian Infrastructure Delivery Authority (VIDA) is at the forefront of these initiatives, overseeing critical infrastructure developments such as the Level Crossing Removal Project, now in conjunction with Rail Projects Victoria, as well as the efforts of the Victorian Health Building Authority and Major Road Projects Victoria. This includes the expansive Big Build Roads initiative.

Persistent advocacy for state and federal investment in essential transport and health infrastructure has been a hallmark of the Council's efforts within Cardinia. From the outset, the Council has actively encouraged its officers to work in partnership with the State Government. This collaboration aimed to strongly advocate for and influence the outcomes of these projects, ensuring the best possible results for the community.

Through this partnership and facilitation approach, Cardinia Shire is being seen by many of these partners as a Council where it is productive and made easy to undertake project delivery, and their projects are supported and facilitated. There is mutual benefit to our partners, Council and community to maximise these relationships – achieving enhanced deliverables, good project outcomes, effective use of resources on both sides and attracting more projects and grant funding.

This strategic approach has been instrumental in aligning the projects with the broader aspirations of the local area, extending beyond the immediate project scope for each individual project. This alignment has fostered a robust and cohesive development strategy, ensuring that the infrastructure not only meets current needs but also supports the future growth and prosperity of the community.

Background

Council's Major Projects Business Unit is responsible for liaising with the State Government agencies responsible for the following projects:

- Level Crossing Removal Projects (LXRP):

- Pakenham – Three rail over road bridges and two stations
- Brunt Road Officer – Road over rail bridge
- Station Street Officer – Road closure
- Station Street Beaconsfield – Road over rail bridge
- Nar Nar Goon Station Carpark Upgrade

- Rail Projects Victoria (RPV):
 - Gippsland Line Upgrade including Bunyip Station upgrade

- Victorian Health Building Authority (VHBA):
 - Pakenham Community Hospital

- Major Roads Projects Victoria (MRPV):
 - Healesville – Koo Wee Rup Road Upgrade from Livestock Way to Manks Road
 - Pakenham Roads Upgrade including:
 - Healesville - Koo Wee Rup Road freeway interchange and road upgrade
 - McGregor Road freeway interchange and road upgrade
 - Racecourse Road upgrade

The establishment of the Major Projects Business Unit was a strategic move by the Cardinia Shire Council to influence and foster collaboration on significant infrastructure projects. This initiative ensures these projects integrate with the local area and act as catalysts for further investment in the region. This approach was key to Council's recent success in obtaining grant funding for the John Street, Drake Place and McGregor Road projects. These Council projects are designed to leverage and further enhance the benefits of state and federal infrastructure upgrades.

The state transport infrastructure projects are set to improve public transport services by reducing travel times across various modes and improving the local road network through the elimination of level crossings. The council's proactive advocacy and collaborative approach have been instrumental in securing significant additional community infrastructure and community benefits. This includes:

- 16 km of shared use paths and extensive footpath connections across the projects.
- New seating within open space areas and at rest areas along the new shared use paths.
- Over 40,000 m² of new community open space in Pakenham between McGregor Road and Main Street including passive and active recreation areas, shelters with tables and seating, a multi-use outdoor events area, half basketball court, exercise area and a new playground.
- New toilets and a Changing Places facility in Pakenham.
- Over 350,000 new plants and hundreds of new trees to improve canopy cover.

Council has collaborated with and advocated to all project teams to apply crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles and best practices to improve community safety. The projects include well-lit open spaces that are designed for people to move through and enjoy safely.

Level Crossing removal projects

Pakenham Level Crossing Removal Project

This project includes the removal of three level crossings at McGregor Road, Main Street and Racecourse Road Pakenham, with a rail over road solution. A significant amount of new public open space is being created within the rail corridor under the elevated rail viaduct. The project

also includes the redevelopment of Pakenham Station, the extension of the metropolitan train line to Pakenham East, and the construction of the new East Pakenham Station.

In addition to the upgraded public transport infrastructure including improved access arrangements to the station and the benefits in traffic movements and travel times due to the removal of the level crossings, the following are notable negotiated enhanced outcomes for the community:

- Provision of a multi-functional outdoor event space with notable pedestrian connections with the commercial precinct and an integrated Changing Places facility located between the future community hospital and the train station allowing for dispersion of amenities within the activity centre.
- A feature crossing integrating the landscape corridor with the Major Activity Centre near Drake Place. This will provide better connectivity between the open space, the commercial precinct and the community hospital site. The feature crossing has been integrated into the design of the open space and aligned with a key activity node that includes a new playground as well as a barbecue, picnic shelters and seating.
- Increased number of bench seats throughout the open space corridor.
- Extensive footpath areas allowing for connections north and south and throughout the new open space.
- Shared use path connecting McGregor Road and the Pakenham Station.
- Strong advocacy for the upgrade of Ryan Road –sealing of the road was added to the project as well as provision of a shared use path to the East Pakenham Station.

Brunt Road Level Crossing Removal Project

This project includes the removal of the Brunt Road level crossing through the construction of a new road bridge over the existing rail tracks. The new bridge will be constructed to the east of the existing road to allow Brunt Road to remain open to traffic for as long as possible during the works.

In addition to the upgraded public transport infrastructure and the benefits in traffic movements and travel times due to the removal of the level crossings the following are notable negotiated enhanced outcomes for the community:

- Shared use path connectivity from east to west under the bridge for residents to school and future sporting precincts.
- Accessible (DDA) compliant pathways on both sides of the bridge for cyclists & pedestrians.
- Planting of close to 50,000 native and indigenous new species.
- Additional seating and rest areas around the new pathways and existing parks.
- Increased lighting for the safety of pedestrians.

Station Street Officer Level Crossing Removal Project

This project involves the removal of the Station Street, Officer level crossing through the closure of Station Street on either side of the rail tracks. While the Officer Precinct Structure Plan identifies the need for an alternative North-South arterial road to be constructed prior to the closure of the level crossing, this road is not within the scope of the project. The Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) is responsible for delivering the North-South arterial road but currently does not have funding for the project. Council will continue to advocate to DTP on the need for this important road connection to be funded and delivered.

The following are notable negotiated enhanced outcomes for the community:

- Shared use path connections from Gilbert Reserve to the Station and Civic Centre and from Officer South Rd from Hickson Rd into the Station for increased safety.
- Planting of close to 4,000 native and indigenous new species.
- Increased lighting for all shared use paths for increased safety.
- Additional seating and rest areas around the new pathways.

Station Street Beaconsfield Level Crossing Removal Project

This project involves the removal of the Station Street, Beaconsfield level crossing through the construction of a new road bridge over the existing tracks. The project area includes a locally significant heritage building at 20 Beaconsfield Avenue and the regionally significant Cardinia Creek parklands which are key concerns for Council among other matters.

In addition to the upgraded public transport infrastructure and the benefits in traffic movements and travel times due to the removal of the level crossings, the following are notable negotiated enhanced outcomes for the community:

- Retention of the Railway Masters heritage house and significant Bunya Bunya Pine.
- Full footpath connectivity over the new bridge for safer access to areas south of the railway.
- New shared use pathway along Beaconsfield Avenue to the Station.
- Planting of close to 75,000 native and indigenous new species.
- Increased lighting for the safety of all pedestrians & commuters.
- Additional seating and rest areas around the new pathways.

Cardinia Road Level Crossing Removal Project

This project involves the removal of the Cardinia level crossing through the construction of a new road bridge over the existing tracks.

In addition to the upgraded public transport infrastructure and the benefits in traffic movements and travel times due to the removal of the level crossings the following are notable negotiated enhanced outcomes for the community:

- Shared use path connectivity under the bridge with active open spaces and artwork.
- Pathways on both sides of the bridge for cyclists & pedestrians.
- Planting of extensive native and indigenous new species.
- Increased lighting for the safety of pedestrians.

Other rail projects

Nar Nar Goon Station Car Park Upgrade

The Nar Nar Goon car park upgrade was part of the larger program known as Car Parks for Commuters and was delivered by the Level Crossing Removal Project (LXRP) agency. The project has delivered an upgrade of the car parking area on the north side of the station which includes 50 parking spaces with accessible parking spaces, pedestrian paths, bicycle hoops, lighting and new CCTV cameras.

Gippsland Line Upgrade – Rail Projects Victoria

The Gippsland Line Upgrade is a project that extends along the rail line from Bairnsdale through to Southern Cross Station. Key works within Cardinia Shire include the Bunyip Station upgrade, track duplication between Bunyip and Longwarry, level crossing upgrade at Tynong, along with signalling and drainage upgrades between Nar Nar Goon and Bunyip.

In addition to the upgraded public transport infrastructure and the benefits in traffic movements and travel times due to the removal of the level crossings the following are notable negotiated enhanced outcomes for the community:

- Connectivity of a second rail line that allows use of the new south station platform and new bus interchange and kiss and ride area for more convenient access.
- Improving myki facilities and upgraded signalling infrastructure for more reliable journeys.
- Improved pedestrian connectivity to the township pedestrians with relocated crossings at the western end of the platform.
- New carparking for commuters.

Pakenham Community Hospital – Victorian Health Building Authority

The Pakenham Community Hospital is being delivered by the Victorian Health Building Authority. The project includes the establishment of a community hospital in Pakenham that will provide a range of integrated health and specialist services.

Council officers are collaborating with the project team to integrate the hospital design with Council's planned upgrades to Drake Place and John Street and the open space corridor being delivered by the Pakenham Level Crossing Removal Project. Council officers are also working to ensure the project applies crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles and best practices to improve community safety within the Pakenham Major Activity Centre.

The intent of enhanced facilitation of this project by the Major projects team is ensuring this project integrates with the wider precinct work underway in Pakenham, rather than operating as a stand alone project within Pakenham.

Pakenham Roads Upgrade – Major Road Projects Victoria

This project includes three stages of works to upgrade the Princes Freeway and sections of McGregor Road, Healesville – Koo Wee Rup Road and Racecourse Road. The project is being delivered by Major Roads Project Victoria with funding from the Australian Government.

Council officers have achieved upgrades to existing road pavements and paths as part of these projects. A forward-looking approach was taken for the design of the McGregor Road upgrades to ensure this road can be declared as a state arterial road in the future. Council has worked constructively with the project team from the early design stages to minimise land acquisition impacts along Bald Hill Road while still achieving the transport and movement objectives of the project.

Healesville- Koo Wee Rup Road Upgrade – Major Road Projects Victoria

This project includes upgrades to Healesville – Koo Wee Rup Road between Livestock Way and Manks Road. The upgrade includes an extra traffic lane in each direction, new traffic lights at Greenhills Road, new bridges over Deep Creek, new roundabouts at Hall Road, south of Deep Creek and at Ballarto Road and a new shared use path.

In addition to the upgrades above, Council officers negotiated to achieve resealing of old Healesville – Koo Wee Rup Road (renamed to Soldiers Road) and repairs to the old Deep Creek bridge. Soldiers Road will become a local road upon completion of the project.

Policy Implications

These projects are generally consistent with several Council policies and documents including the Pakenham Major Activity Structure Plan 2021, Pakenham Major Activity Centre Urban Design Framework 2021 and Officer Precinct Structure Plan.

Relevance to Council Plan

1.1 We empower our communities to be healthy, connected and resilient

1.1.4 Facilitate a partnership approach to create safer communities.

2.1 We support the creation of liveable spaces and places

2.1.1 Advocate, plan for and deliver accessible community infrastructure and services that address community need.

2.1.2 Plan and maintain safe, inclusive and connected open spaces, places and active travel routes.

2.1.4 Advocate for increased and more-connected public transport options.

2.1.5 Upgrade Council's road network to improve safety and connectivity while considering traffic demand and freight transport needs.

5.1 We practise responsible leadership

5.1.1 Build trust through meaningful community engagement and transparent decision-making.

5.1.4 Maximise value for our community through efficient service delivery, innovation, strategic partnerships and advocacy.

Climate Emergency Consideration

The proposed infrastructure upgrades will improve public transport provision and active transport infrastructure in the project areas. This will help encourage a transport mode shift away from cars and reduce transport related carbon emissions. Further the new infrastructure will be designed and maintained in line with climate change predictions and assumptions, such as flooding and extreme heat.

Consultation/Communication

Each of the individual projects include community consultation activities. Council's Major Projects team has regular meetings with their State Government peers at LXP, RPV, VHBA and MRPV to review plans and provide input into the design of the projects and advocate for the best outcomes for the community.

Additionally, Council's Chief Executive Officer and General Manager Infrastructure and Environment regularly meet with the CEO and senior staff from the Level Crossing Removal Project to resolve any strategic issues and to advocate for additional resources to complete these projects.

Regular briefings on projects to Councillors ensure transparency and allow for informed decision-making, reflecting a commitment to advocating for the community's best interests.

Financial and Resource Implications

Council has worked closely with the Level Crossing Removal Project regarding financial and resource implications and support has been provided.

The support and facilitation outlined within this report by the Major Projects team is achieved with 6 EFT. These roles are funded by a combination of Council and grant funding.

Conclusion

Pakenham is undergoing a significant transformation with multiple infrastructure projects aimed at enhancing the region's connectivity, safety, and community amenities. The Pakenham Level Crossing Removal Project is a key initiative, removing level crossings by constructing elevated rail sections, which will not only improve traffic flow but also create new community spaces. Complementing this, the Pakenham Roads Upgrade is set to alleviate traffic bottlenecks and enhance road safety, making journeys smoother and more enjoyable.

The establishment of the Pakenham Community Hospital is another milestone, promising to deliver essential health services like urgent care, day surgery, and chemotherapy, easing the pressure on nearby major hospitals and allowing residents to access healthcare closer to home. The complementary Pakenham Revitalisation Project is a comprehensive initiative designed to enhance the activity centre of Pakenham, with a focus on Main Street and its adjacent areas. This project is set to unfold in 12 stages, aiming to transform Pakenham into a dynamic and thriving hub for both residents and businesses. The upgrades will include improved pedestrian amenities, new footpaths, and increased opportunities for outdoor dining, creating a consistent and attractive streetscape. Additionally, the project will complement the state's investment in infrastructure, ensuring that Pakenham evolves into a destination that can accommodate its rapidly growing population. With a vision to make Pakenham a place

people are proud to visit and call home, the project is a step towards building a vibrant community and a prosperous future.

Further enhancing the region's transport infrastructure, the level crossing removals at Beaconsfield and Officer, along with the Gippsland Line upgrade from Bunyip to Pakenham, are set to provide faster, more reliable train services and improve safety for both motorists and train passengers.

These projects collectively represent a forward-thinking approach to urban development, ensuring Cardinia evolves into a more connected and dynamic region.

Local councils play a crucial role in representing and addressing the needs of their communities. By taking the initiative to collaborate with state government departments, Council has demonstrated the capacity to lead and advocate for improved outcomes for each of these projects. This proactive approach ensures that community needs are not only recognised but are given the necessary attention. Such partnerships are essential for the successful implementation of these projects that have a direct impact on the well-being of residents.