

## **9 LITTLE ROAD BRIDGE CLOSURE**

FILE REFERENCE INT1831817

RESPONSIBLE GENERAL MANAGER Michael Ellis

AUTHOR Christopher Marshall

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That

- 1 Council endorse the closure of Little Road bridge to vehicular traffic while maintaining pedestrian and cyclist activities similar to that of a shared path.
- 2 Main Drain Road between Little Road and Pitt Road is included in the 2018/19 resheeting program

### **Attachments**

- 1 [↓](#) Little Rd Bridge public hearing presentation 7 Pages
- 2 [↓](#) Minutes for Little Road bridge public hearing February 2018 4 Pages

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Little Road bridge is located across Bunyip River at the north end of Little Road, Iona connecting Main Drain Road South and Bunyip River Road. The bridge is an old style timber deck bridge with steel support beams with heritage significance. Due to its current condition the bridge is proposed to be closed to vehicular access and made a shared path.

The Little Road bridge has a 7 tonne load limit following Level 3 condition assessment in 2013. This report also identified that as a long term solution the bridge would require significant strengthening or replacing to meet the traffic demands and requirements.

The heritage significance of the Little Road bridge, supports extending the bridges life for as long as possible.

The Little Road bridge is located between bridges at Thirteen Mile Road (1km to west) and the recently constructed bridge at Bunyip-Modella Road (2.9km to east) which are considered suitable alternatives for traffic currently using the Little Road bridge.

As the shortest route between the Little Road bridge and the sealed road network, Main Drain Road between Little Road and Pitt Road will be included in the 2018/19 resheeting program to ensure that the road is in the best condition possible for motorists

Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Little Road bridge is located across Bunyip River at the north end of Little Road, Iona connecting Main Drain Road South and Bunyip River Road. The bridge is an old style timber deck bridge with steel support beams with heritage significance. Due to its current condition the bridge is proposed to be closed to vehicular access and made a shared path.

The Little Road bridge has a 7 tonne load limit following Level 3 condition assessment in 2013. This report also identified that as a long term solution the bridge would require significant structural strengthening or replacement to meet the traffic demands. In the past 12 months the bridge headstock on the south abutment has been repaired and reinstated. However, this is a temporary fix as the approach slab abutment on this side of the bridge is dropping and currently being monitored. The bridge will require significant maintenance works in the short term if vehicle access is maintained including deck timber and pier replacements. Total labour hours spent on the bridge is averaged at approximately 12 work days per year. Over the past several years some of the maintenance work that has been carried out on the bridge includes repair and replacement of the various timber assets, including but not limited to cross beams, decking and handrails members.

The Little Road bridge is located between the bridge at Thirteen Mile Road (1km to west) and the recently constructed bridge at Bunyip-Modella Road (2.9km to east). These two bridges are considered strategic bridges across Bunyip River able to support large and heavy commercial and agricultural vehicles and are on the major north-south collector roads running through the area. The 7 tonne load limit of Little Road bridge prevents these vehicles from being able to use this bridge.

A traffic count conducted in October 2017 indicated that an average of 132 vehicles per day use the Little Road bridge. The surrounding road network and bridges have the capacity to support the closure of Little Road bridge.

The Little Road bridge has heritage significance as the last remaining timber bridge across Bunyip River. It is evidence of the massive swamp drainage project carried out and the eventual development of transport networks when this area was turned into rich farming land. The construction of many of these timber bridges along the drains also symbolises the devastation of the 1934 floods, when the previous timber bridges were washed away. When the upgrade of the timber bridges across Bunyip River was being planned, it was identified that one of the bridges should be retained for heritage purposes and that the Little Road bridge was the most appropriate to be retained.

The heritage significance of the Little Road bridge, supports extending the bridges life for as long as possible. As such it is considered that the safest and most cost effective option is to close the bridge as a road preventing vehicular access and convert it to a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists. This will continue to allow the local residents non-vehicular access across the river using this bridge, which includes access to St Joseph's Catholic Church, and maintain the heritage associated with the bridge.

As the shortest route between the Little Road bridge and the sealed road network, Main Drain Road between Little Road and Pitt Road will be included in the 2018/19 resheeting program to ensure that the road is in the best condition possible for motorists that are unaware of the closure to get to the sealed road network. At this time, potential improvements for localised widening will also be considered.

Consultation has been undertaken in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989 and residents' concerns from the consultation are outline below.

## **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Nil

## **RELEVANCE TO COUNCIL PLAN**

This proposal is relevant to the following actions in the Council Plan:

3.1.1. Maintain all Council roads and supporting infrastructure in accordance with the Road Management Act 2004.

3.1.4. Manage Council's assets like roads, drainage, footpaths and buildings, etc. in a way that ensures they are adequately maintained over their life.

5.3.3. Manage the municipality's finances and assets in a responsible way.

## CONSULTATION/COMMUNICATION

Consultation was undertaken in accordance with clause 9, Schedule 11 of the Local Government Act, 1989, that required under sections 207A and 223 that a person be given the opportunity to make a submission under section 223.

A public notice was published on the Council website on 23rd October 2017 and in the Pakenham Gazette on 25th October 2017. The consultation period ran for 33 days from 23rd October till 24th November 2017. A total of 62 people from 35 addresses responded, the majority as part of a petition.

A public hearing was held on Tuesday 13th February 2018 from 7pm at St Joseph's Catholic Church, Iona. The public hearing was for the committee consisting of the ward councillors to hear responses in person from the two respondents that wished to present their concerns in person. Following these two submissions a general discussion was held to allow other members of the public to express their concerns. The public hearing was attended by 43 people.

The main concerns raised were:

- Maintenance of the bridge that has occurred on the bridge over previous years
- Access during floods as the road level drops to either side of the bridge,
- The quality and convenience of the alternative routes due to their unsealed nature

The heritage significance of the bridge was acknowledged by most of the respondents; however the loss of vehicle access across the bridge was perceived as a loss of investment in the Iona community.

## FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Timber bridges of this heritage aren't designed to meet current day vehicle conditions. In the recent years Council has spent several thousand per annum on minor maintenance works for the bridge. In coming years it is expected that major maintenance works will be required if the bridge stays open to vehicular traffic.

The proposed road closure will reduce the future maintenance requirements for the bridge, as the bridge will no longer need to accommodate the same loads that it currently accommodates. As a result, this will reduce costs to Council. More importantly this is expected to extend the life of the heritage bridge by at least 10-20 years.

Even with significant maintenance works, as a vehicle bridge it is expected the bridge will still remain functional to traffic for only a few more years until the bridge reaches the end of its useful life. At this point it will no longer be suitable for any users and be fully removed. Although difficult to put a price on, losing all heritage value with it.

The cost to replace the current bridge structure and to bring it up to current standards would be well in excess of \$1.4 Million. This would need to be a concrete structure and would result in the loss of the heritage value of the bridge.

The financial costs to close the bridge can be accommodated within the 2017/18 bridge program, including improvements to the surface to ensure it is suitable for pedestrians and cyclists.

The financial cost of resheeting Main Drain Road can be incorporated within the 2018/19 unsealed road resheeting program.

## CONCLUSION

Little Road bridge is of heritage significance as the last remaining timber bridge over Bunyip River. It is in need of significant major works to maintain access for vehicular traffic, which will only prolong its useful life for a few more years. Given the nearby alternative routes available and heritage considerations, the safest and most cost effective solution is to close the bridge to vehicular traffic and convert the bridge to a shared path which will prolong the life of the bridge significantly.

Whilst consultation has raised concerns regarding the suitability of alternative routes, these routes are considered suitable to accommodate the additional traffic currently catered to by the bridge. This is expected to have minimal impact on commercial and agricultural businesses due to the existing load limit on the bridge.

It is therefore recommended that Little Road bridge is closed to vehicular traffic and converted to a shared path and the shortest route to the sealed road network along Main Drain Road be resheeted.



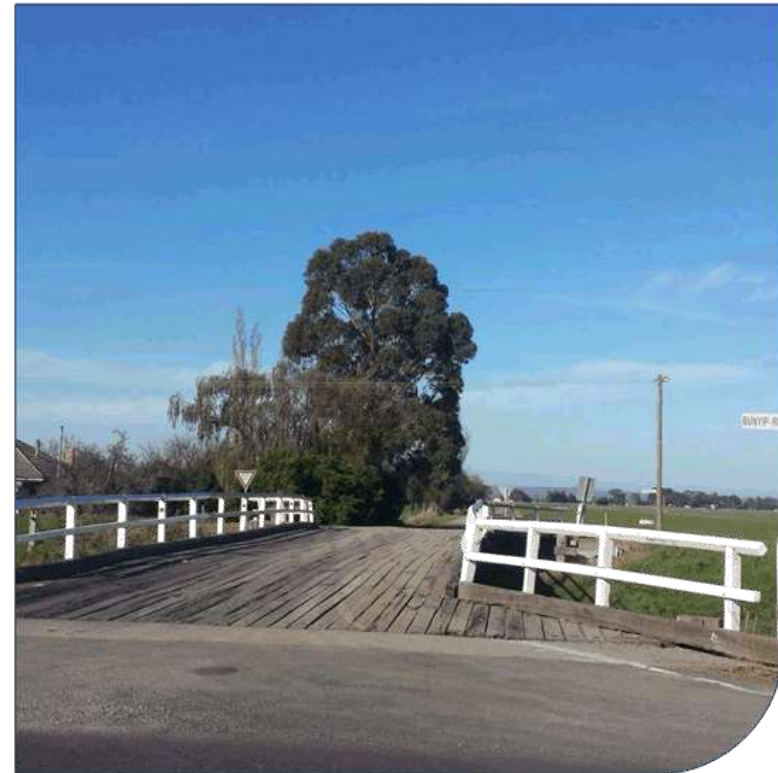
Cardinia Shire Council

# Little Road bridge, Iona

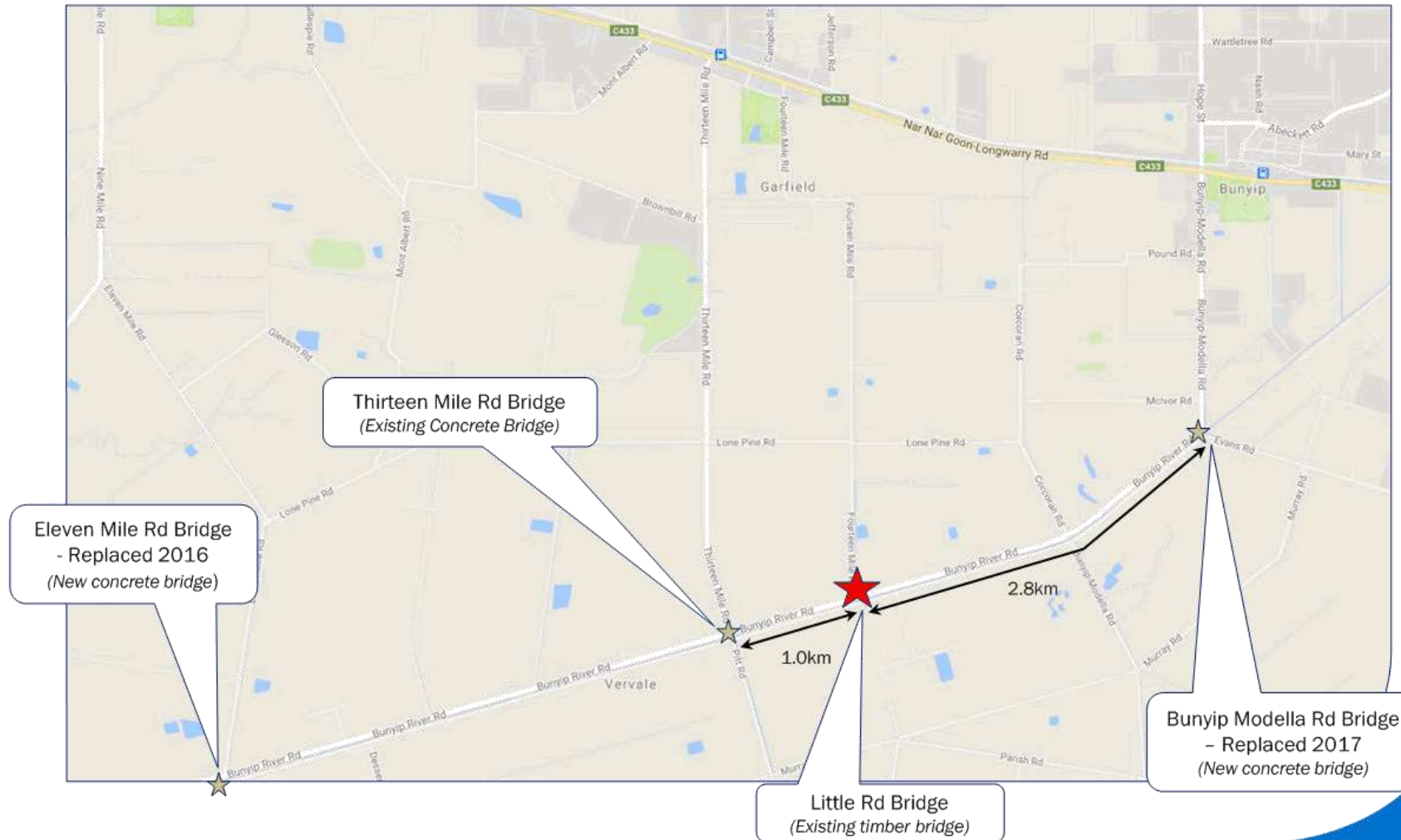
13 February 2018

# Bridge

- Timber bridge
- Load limit of 7t
- Pre-1948 design standards
  - Not designed for modern vehicles
- Avg. 132 vehicles per day



# Location



# Heritage significance

- Constructed as part of swamp drainage project
- Survived 1934 floods
- Last remaining timber bridge over Bunyip River





# Replacement

- Approaching end of useful life for vehicles
- More than \$1.4 million
- Must be concrete to comply with current standards
- Little strategically significant within road network



# Current Proposal

- To maintain heritage of area
- Keep bridge open to pedestrians and cyclists
- Prolong life of bridge



# Thank you

We will now hear submissions from:

- Joe Interlandi
- Gerrit te Hennepe



## Meeting agenda/minutes

Meeting:	Little Rd Bridge closure public hearing	Date:	13 February 2018		
Chair:	Cr. Graeme Moore	Location:	St Joseph's Church, Iona		
Minute taker:	Christopher Marshall	Start	7.30pm	End:	9.55pm
Council representatives:	Cr. Graeme Moore, Cr. Ray Brown, Cathal O'Loughlin, Christopher Marshall				
Attendees:	43 public attendees including children				
Meeting outcome statement:	For the Council appointed committee (Port ward councillors) to hear the submissions of Joe Interlandi and Gerritt te Hennepe in accordance with the requirement of the Local Government Act 1989				

## Agenda/minutes

Item	Subject	Who	Duration
1.	Open hearing and outline agenda	Chair	7.30-7.34pm
2.	Presentation of background to reasons for proposal	Cathal O'Loughlin	7.34pm-7.39pm
3.	Submission: Gerritt te Hennepe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learnt about it from Warragul gazette</li> <li>• Made people aware of it</li> <li>• People in this area will not accept it to be closed</li> <li>• Why is bridge in its current state?</li> <li>• Want access to bridge to go to Bunyip, Bunyip main centre with shopping centres, doctors, etc.</li> <li>• Also required for access to the church that is significant to church</li> <li>• Bunyip growing</li> <li>• Iona growing, blocks being subdivided.</li> <li>• What is the alternative given narrowness of roads?</li> <li>• What is the Local Government Act and format of the meeting</li> <li>• Section part 1.43 responsibility of Council to keep community happy and what community wants</li> <li>• No structural management plan for bridge. There is an Australian standard for bridge management plans.</li> <li>• \$1.4 million not a lot of money</li> </ul>		7.39pm-7.45pm
4.	Submission: Joe Interlandi <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridge closure not acceptable or reasonable</li> <li>• Heritage bridge should be protected, has heritage overlay</li> <li>• Questions value of replacement. Doesn't need to be same quality as Bunyip-Modella bridge</li> <li>• What is cost of maintaining/repairing not replacing?</li> <li>• Not of limited value, shortest access for family driving, not agricultural equipment. Light equipment can use the bridge.</li> <li>• Accepts not major road connection</li> <li>• Expects rates go to maintaining and improving infrastructure. Closing bridge is failure to do this.</li> <li>• Pakenham gets significant amount of infrastructure</li> </ul>		7.46pm-8.45pm

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alternative is disadvantageous due to unsealed road as it increases length of these roads travelled. Seal road on south side</li> <li>Extend 14 Mile across river and keep Little Rd bridge for heritage</li> </ul>		
5.	<p>General discussion and Q&amp;A:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance costs unknown due to not being able to predict all repair requirements</li> <li>Review of all Council timber bridges occurred following fire trucks tankers having issues crossing due to mass of vehicles</li> <li>Bridge maintenance: Bridges have useful life after which replacement is generally only option, bridge is being maintained, spending 10-20k per year to keep it open.</li> <li>Pakenham and growth area help to bring funds into Shire that is also distributed to other areas of the shire.</li> <li>Bunyip-Modella bridge was part federally funded. Unknown if funding would be available from other sources for Little Rd bridge.</li> <li>Access from area when floods occur. River floods either side.</li> <li>Increasing flood frequency. Alternative routes are not always an alternative.</li> <li>Will roads on south side get additional maintenance or improvements?</li> <li>Additional wear and costs for cars traveling alternative unsealed routes.</li> <li>Increased risk on unsealed roads compared to bitumen roads</li> <li>Can a bridge be built beside it?</li> <li>What would bitumen cost on south side of river?</li> <li>Residents on alternative routes to be negatively impacted by additional traffic</li> <li>What is wrong using Thirteen Mile Rd? A: Need to go backwards to go forward and further on dirt road. Want to use the bitumen road.</li> <li>Who will make the decision on the fate of the bridge? A: Decision to what will happen to bridge and funding will be determined by full Council</li> <li>Concerns funds were reallocated after Ash Wednesday towards areas affected by the bush fires but not relocated back to Iona area. This is further reduction in services to area.</li> <li>Why are European bridges of significantly older designs maintained and this can't be done here?</li> <li>Melbourne Water will have influence on replacement designs.</li> <li>Will bridge be maintained if closed to vehicles? A: Will need to be maintained in accordance with Road Management Plan</li> <li>What maintenance has occurred? A: List to be provided in Council report</li> <li>Gaps in bridge planks and not good quality, hazard for pedestrians and cyclists – identified by resident who walked across to attend hearing.</li> <li>Can load limit be reduced to extend life?</li> <li>Can gantry or physical obstructions be provided? A: Doesn't restrict mass</li> <li>Not economical to maintain. What is community getting back to replace bridge?</li> <li>Want additional funding to be provided towards area</li> <li>How is Jolley Rd bridge road costs justified? A: Only access into this area and required for school bus.</li> <li>Same Council plans objectives used to justify this closure have</li> </ul>	Chair facilitating	8.46- 9.55pm

	<p>been used to justify replacement in different cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crack in Bun-Mod bridge concrete. Council officers will report so can be inspected.</li> </ul>		
6.	Closing remarks by committee	Cr. Graeme Moore, Cr. Ray Brown	
7.	<p>Process following hearing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report to be presented to Council at April Council meeting for decision to be made</li> <li>Details collected from attendees that wish to be notified of Council decision</li> </ul>	Chair	
8.	Meeting Closed	Chair	9.55pm

Note: you can add more table rows by putting your cursor in the last cell on the right and hitting the tab key.

#### Contact details for attendees to be notified of Council decision

Attendee	Email	Postal Address
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**GENERAL REPORTS**