

## FACT SHEET 3

### *Roads and Streets*

Council maintains a road network of 1,319km made up of State Roads, Regional Roads and Local Roads. The State Road network is maintained by Council on behalf of the Roads and Maritime Services (formerly the Roads and Traffic Authority) and the Regional and Local Road networks are owned and maintained by Council. The road network is broken down as follows:

The road network is in a state of decline. The current funding is not sufficient to maintain the road network and as such, Council cannot deliver the level of service expected by its communities. Funding for renewals is well below that required to preserve the assets that remain in fair to good condition. Many of these assets are at or near the end of their useful life and require significant expenditure to bring them up to a satisfactory standard. The network contains a number of narrow and winding roads and streets which do not

ROAD CLASS	Sealed Road Length (km)	Unsealed Road Length (km)	Urban Streets Length (km)	Sub-Total by Road Class (km)
State Highways	112	0	3	115
Regional Roads	106	15	7	128
Local Roads	216	807	53	1,076
<b>Sub-Total by Type (km)</b>	<b>434</b>	<b>822</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>1,319</b>

Within these roads and streets there are also other significant assets that include:

- 109 causeways with a total length of 1,628m on Local Roads;
- 253 Grids and 79 Gates on Local Roads (maintained by the Permit holders);
- 4,102 drainage structures with a total length of 35.5km on Local and Regional Roads;
- 27.2km of guardrail and safety fence on Local and Regional Roads;
- 6,164 items of road side furniture such as signs, bus shelters and seats; and
- 15.2km of footpaths and cycleways.

In 2012 Council completed a *Transport Asset Management Plan* covering its network of roads and streets, as well as bridges. The financial analysis undertaken as part of this plan can be summarised as follows:

- The total replacement cost of the existing assets is \$298M. This is made up of \$96M worth of bridges, \$17M worth of urban streets and footpaths and \$185M worth of rural roads and drainage;
- The annual funding shortfall over the next ten years is \$4.05M per year. \$3.0M of this shortfall is associated with the capital replacement, or renewal, of existing assets; and
- \$70M worth of these assets are in poor to very poor condition.

meet current engineering standards, or the expectations of the residents and road users. Funding for annual maintenance is also below that required to maintain the assets in their existing condition, or to ensure that rates of deterioration do not increase. If funding levels cannot be increased, reduced service levels need to be agreed to in consultation with the local communities.

The current budget for the maintenance of roads and streets is \$2.7M, made up of \$695,000 for Regional Roads, \$1,562,000 for Rural Local Roads and \$478,000 for Urban Streets. These allocations are required to cover the costs of routine works such as pothole patching, slashing, spraying, grading, patch gravelling, clearing drains, street lighting, signage, guardrail, guide posts and line marking. The funds available severely limit the extent of work that Council can undertake each year and Council struggles to meet the expectations of its communities.

The impact of the high frequency of heavy rainfall events we have experienced over recent years also needs to be acknowledged in any discussion on the financial requirements for the ongoing maintenance of Council's road network. Council has received \$12.6M in Natural Disaster funding for the restoration of damage to roads and streets between 2008 and 2012, an average of \$2.5M per year. Despite the disruption to the road network at varying levels during this time, the injection of

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## *Sustaining our LGA*

funds of this magnitude has allowed Council to achieve significant efficiencies by combining its maintenance works with flood damage restoration works. This has meant that more was able to be achieved with Council's funding than would have otherwise been possible. In some areas, primarily unsealed roads, this has resulted in the condition of roads generally not changing from their pre-2008 condition, with some areas improving slightly where expenditure has been focused. However, relying on this funding source on an ongoing basis in the future brings great uncertainty and risk. If weather patterns revert to a more regular rainfall pattern that still causes damage to the road network, but does not result in Natural Disaster declarations, Council could see a rapid deterioration of the condition of the road network over the medium term (5-10 years) as it would not have the funds to repair some damaged areas, and this in turn often leads to accelerated rates of deterioration of the roads. This is particularly of concern in relation to the unsealed road network.

*Council's Asset Management Strategy* identifies a number of options available for the long term management of its roads and streets that can be achieved within the current budget. These can be summarised as follows:

- focus rehabilitation and upgrade expenditure on the highest trafficked roads and streets linked to the major arterial roads, acknowledging that other areas will not be able to be considered;

to fully implement any of these programs, and the long term life cycle cost benefits from these programs will not fully eventuate unless they are implemented in full. The programs identified are:

- Initial sealing of the most heavily trafficked unsealed roads – \$7M program, at an average cost of \$300,000/km, implemented over ten years;
- Improve drainage infrastructure on rural roads in order to reduce the impact of heavy rain, ensure adequate width for passing vehicles and to make grading easier and more efficient on the unsealed roads – \$4M program implemented over 20 years;
- Widen narrow sealed pavements to allow vehicles to pass without the need to drive on the unsealed shoulders, reducing shoulder wear and avoiding accelerated deterioration of pavements – \$5M program over 10 years;
- Provide kerb and guttering and widen narrow urban streets – \$2M program over 10 years; and
- Reseal existing sealed roads that are still in fair to good condition, so that the wearing surface remains intact, reducing potholing, cracking and ingress of moisture that lead to accelerated deterioration of the underlying pavement, causing potholing, rutting, shoving and deformation of the road – \$30,000/km over a network of \$386km and at a reseal frequency of once every 10 years.

Strategic Expenditure Area	Ideal Annual Expenditure	Current Annual Expenditure	Current Annual Shortfall
Initial Sealing of heavily trafficked unsealed roads	\$700,000	\$0	\$700,000
Improve drainage infrastructure on rural roads	\$200,000	\$31,000	\$169,000
Widen narrow sealed rural roads to two lane width	\$500,000	\$300,000	\$200,000
Provide kerb and guttering and widen narrow streets	\$200,000	\$75,000	\$125,000
Resealing of existing sealed roads in fair to good condition	\$1,200,000	\$535,000	\$665,000
<b>Sub-Totals</b>	<b>\$2,800,000</b>	<b>\$941,000</b>	<b>\$1,859,000</b>

- focus maintenance expenditure on highest utilised roads and allow the condition of the less utilised roads to deteriorate; and
- imposition of reduced speed limits on sections of poorer quality road.

Outlined below are a number of capital works programs identified by Council where improvements can be made to the existing road network that will lead to a reduction in the long term cost of maintaining roads and streets. At present there is not sufficient funding

Council continues to strive to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the work methods applied to its roads and streets. We have also identified cost effective programs and strategies that can be implemented with modest amounts of additional funding, that will allow Council to deliver the type of road network that can foster a safe, happy growing community, and stimulate the economy of the area. The challenge now is to source the additional revenue required to deliver these programs over the next 10 years.