

Meeting Minutes

Meeting:	Yan Yean Road upgrade – Community Reference Group
Date:	Monday, 14 May 2018
Attendees:	VicRoads Chairperson: Warren Bradshaw (WB) Independent Facilitator: Bruce Turner (BT) Community Members: Anne Trueman (AT), Barbara Marshall (BaM), Joanne Jamieson (JJ), John Yeomans (JY), Milton Embling (ME), Neisha Forbes (NF), Pam Hoyne (PH), Susan Farley (SF) VicRoads: Ben Matters (BM), Chinthaka Arachchige (CA), Charlotte Claney (CC), Damian van Dyke (DvD), Nerilee Kerslake (NK)
Apologies:	VicRoads: Nancy Joseph (NJ)

Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

WB welcomed the group to the meeting and asked the new group members to introduce themselves and share why they wished to be involved in the CRG.

SF - Plenty resident, wants to see community interests balanced with motorists needs and have the project go as smoothly as possible.

BaM – Doreen resident interested in maintaining the Green Wedge and mitigating any impacts to it.

ME – resident for nearly 50 years. Family is in Plenty too, so has been involved in Guides, kindergarten and school in the local area. Member of the Plenty Historical Society, Plenty Hall Committee, and Plenty Community Action Group (PCAG).

JY - owns Homestead Farm in Doreen and has lived locally for 40 years. Passionate about trees and understands the necessity to upgrade the road.

BT introduced himself to the new CRG members and stated that his role is to facilitate a productive meeting and free up WB to act as Chair and share his substantial project knowledge.

Item 2 – Confirming the agenda

DvD noted that PCAG put forward some questions yesterday and suggested we cover off some high priority issues during the meeting, tackling in 'other business' what isn't picked up during 'key topics'.

Action 1.3 – DvD said safety concerns have been raised with Contractor. NF still concerned about motorists coming out of facility and turning right. Thinks it should be left turn only out of aged care home. DvD assured that the design of new intersection will solve this issue. No right turn in or out and they will have a dedicated slip lane. Just a matter of observing during construction. CA said he would talk to the managers of the aged care home to see if they can talk to their visitors and staff. [action closed]

Action 2.1 - CC advised she had contacted MR and that MR has permanently withdrawn from the group. [action closed]

Action 2.2 - CC advised that the Terms of Reference had been updated to include the amendments proposed at the previous CRG meeting. *A copy was circulated at the meeting. All CRG members signed onto the ToR.* [action closed]

Action 2.3 - DvD confirmed this had been done, and shared with Jonathon Risby at Nillumbik Council and PCAG. DvD explained to new members that traffic counts had been undertaken on 15 local roads in March, and will continue at 6 monthly intervals, with the next traffic counts to happen in September. DvD explained

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regular traffic monitoring on local roads will provide insights into how traffic is dispersing during construction. SF asked if Council had shared their traffic counts with VicRoads and enquired if they were similar numbers to VicRoads' March data. DvD confirmed that Council had shared their data and it was similar to the March data. BT said to close out this action VicRoads should distribute traffic count data to group. VicRoads agreed and committed to do so prior to June CRG meeting. [action closed]

JJ asked if Council gave a date on looking at overhanging trees? CA said no but he will follow up.

NF requested the minutes from the March CRG meeting be amended to clarify the Plenty Community Action Group (PCAG) formed after a community meeting and NF herself was not responsible for its conception. (NF was overseas while minutes were being reviewed and approved by members) CC committed to do so, acknowledging that NF was overseas when other CRG members provided comment on the minutes prior to them being finalised and published. CC informed NF that altering web content is a somewhat involved and lengthy process, so may take some time to complete. NF comfortable with this.

WB gave an overview of the new Major Roads Project Authority (MRPA) that is to be established with part of VicRoads within the Office of the Coordinator General (OCG) Major Transport Infrastructure Program. WB listed the other major authorities that sit under the OCG and the suburban road upgrades that will sit with new authority. WB reassured that while the Yan Yean Road upgrade will have a new internal reporting line, there will be no notable change to how things operate from a community perspective. WB acknowledged that the establishment of MRPA is a fairly significant change within Government and will roll out over next few months – with structure and reporting to formally switch over on 1 July 2018. JJ asked if additional funding was also announced. WB said Daniel Andrews announced 2.2 billion in funding for Northern Roads and South-East Roads upgrade packages. Stage 2 of the Yan Yean Road upgrade and the Bridge Inn Road upgrade will be packed together under the Northern Roads package to be delivered as a Public Private Partnership (PPP). NF enquired about the organisational structure of MRPA. WB replied that the Coordinator General reports to the Secretary of the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources, who reports to the Minister for Roads and Road Safety (on road projects). DvD added that a new VicRoads Chief Executive was recently appointed, Allen Garner, and that he formally started today. DvD said one of the major positives of the change, is that now the project team could be more focussed on project delivery without the broad VicRoads portfolio. WB agreed that there will be opportunity for greater synergy and that it will be easier for the team to collaborate and share learnings with other authorities also working under the OCG.

ACTION 3.1: VR to follow up with Council on date where overhanging trees will be dealt with and report back to group.

ACTION 3.2: VR to amend March CRG meeting minutes to clarify the PCAG formed following a community meeting and publish updated minutes on website.

Item 3 – Project update

Stage 1 project update

DvD – Works are progressing at Memorial Drive where the retaining walls are being constructed to straighten the alignment. Temporary safety barriers have progressively been installed to facilitate safe work areas across multiple construction zones. Continuing to work on ROW fencing. Bulk earth works will begin shortly near Kurrak Road and continue as the cut to fill ratio is balanced across the site. CA added that approval was recently given from the power company to relocate all the power poles so works can begin.

DvD has received some questions about the operational capacity of the Diamond Creek Road intersection. The group noted the constraints the project must work with at this location. DvD explained the proposed new lane configuration and dedicated bus lane. JY said the intersection is currently a bottleneck. DvD acknowledged this and offered to share the latest design plans at the next CRG meeting. NF wants the

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entrance to the aged care home relocated to Diamond Creek Road given the facilities address is technically Diamond Creek Road. CA reminded NF that VR has no ability to do this, as the aged care home applied for a planning permit to have the entrance on Yan Yean Road, and Council approved that permit.

DvD brought up the recent media attention and makeshift signs around community dissatisfaction with compensation for compulsory acquired land. DvD explained that we work under an Act and the compensation process is not a discretionary process. DvD offered for Property Services to attend a PCAG meeting to go through the process again with impacted landowners if that would be helpful. JY has heard someone got offered little for their property. DvD said he will not comment on individual cases but explained that the State covers legal costs and valuers costs for residents, everything goes through the Valuer General, and then the landowners have to sign off on an offer. DvD stressed that properties are valued based on a before and after scenario. VR doesn't have any discretion on how the formula is administered and the calculation made, it is an Act of Parliament. WB believes there is confusion out in the community on how the process works, so people are getting worried. DvD reiterated that it is important for the community to know that it is not someone from VR coming and 'low balling' the value of a property. BT agreed that it is a highly regulated prescribed process. JY said he thought that the Government (not VR) is ripping individuals off. DvD went into more detail, explaining that often times where a portion of land is to be acquired, the landowner would receive two offers. One for the portion of land to be acquired and the other for the balance of the land (i.e. the whole property) plus an additional 10% 'solatium' for inconvenience. ME asked if the land acquisition and compensation brochure is available online. BM confirmed it is. BM – VR has met and had 1:1 meetings with 100% of landowners on Stage 2 and they all have a direct contact number. WB - we are still a long, long way off making offers. DvD - the key is information, VR can't change the Act but can provide all the information that we can to help those impacted through the difficult acquisition process.

Stage 2 project update

BM apologised for being late and introduced himself to the group as Team Leader for Stage 2. ME asked how many properties impacted by acquisition on Stage 2. BM responded there are approximately 63 landowners that VR may need to acquire land from. BaM asked which side of the road land is to be acquired. BM said both. Beginning predominantly with the northern side near Stage 1, then both sides to Yarrambat Golf Course, then mostly Western side to Jorgensen Avenue, then mainly the Eastern side to try to avoid acquiring dwellings to Bridge Inn Road. BM added that it is early in the design process and nothing is settled yet but the preliminary reference design is available online. BaM is particularly interested in the impact to Green Wedge land as opposed to the more developed Whittlesea side. BM confirmed land will need to be acquired from both sides to upgrade the road.

BM reminded everyone that at the last CRG meeting the team was gearing up for drop-in community information sessions. These were held at Plenty Valley Christian College on Wednesday evening 18 April and Yarrambat Primary School on Saturday morning 21 April. Received lots of feedback just asking us to get on with it. Feedback also heavily featured concerns around access for residents on Yan Yean Road between Laurie Street and Bannons Lane, as well as residents on Ashley Road and Vista Court. Feedback was also received stating the local importance of the two River Red Gums near Doctors Gully Road. JY said they are the oldest trees in the area. BaM agreed. BM - this is why we consult the community on the reference design, to get this kind of feedback. BM - the preliminary reference design is a functional road design, then through consulting the local community the team can better understand the community impact and use community feedback to refine the design further.

BaM said she had been on many committees and they all failed to achieve satisfying outcomes for the community. BaM feels the community isn't completely trusting of the value or impact their feedback will have. BM said he wanted to build that trust by talking through issues with the local community. BM - Stage 2 is in

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planning, which means we have to prove to an Independent Panel that we have heard community objections and suggestions, and we have to show how we have refined the design to address these concerns.

NF said she wanted more VR staff to attend the Saturday community session. CC explained all Project Team staff were there except Sookfei who went on maternity leave between the Wednesday and Saturday sessions. BM said VR feel the sessions were successful, with just shy of 200 people attending and lots of feedback received. CC confirmed nearly 250 feedback forms received online and in hard copy to date. BM said once we have finished collating the feedback received, VR will update the web site with a feedback summary and an FAQ document addressing the concerns raised by the community in the feedback forms.

PH said she felt the previous Community Panel got a lot of changes through the Stage 1 design, so felt optimistic about the Stage 2 team listening and taking learnings from Stage 1. NK agreed, stating Stage 2 were planning 6:1 batter slopes and a wide centre median strip but have taken learnings from Stage 1 and refined the design prior to it being released in April.

WB - we now have Bridge Inn Road included in the package of works. BM said previously we weren't sure how far our funding would take us but with the recent funding announcement we can confidently say we can build the entire scope and now upgrade Bridge Inn Road too. JY agreed it is necessary that Bridge Inn Road be upgraded too.

JY wants to know why we can't avoid impacting the only 500-year-old River Red Gums on his property by acquiring land from Doreen Reserve. BM said nothing was off the table in terms of investigation of options to avoid and minimise impact to the environment and the community. BaM spoke about 'decades of disappointment' at government authorities who had consulted the community about environmental values to no effect. She said Doreen Hall was demolished for a road so now it is so important we protect what remains and avoid impacting the post office / general store. BM noted that people value different things, whether it is the trees or heritage buildings or crown land etc. BaM pointed out that Doreen is a very old district and one of the earliest in Melbourne. JY - the school turns 150 in October. BaM said that the Green Wedge on one side and Laurimar on the other has divided Doreen and feelings are running hot particularly within the farming community. BaM highlighted that it is an emotional and hot topic to avoid impacting landmarks or the character of Doreen. NF asked if the corner store is heritage listed. BM said that the Council short listed it in 2015 but decided it didn't warrant heritage status. BM added that since it was short listed, VR recognise the importance of attempting to preserve the look and of the local area, including acknowledging its history. JY added that it was rebuilt in 1936 after being burned down.

BT checked on progress with tackling the list of PCAG issues so far. NF said well, but still lots of cover so may need to cover off some concerns during the time allotted for additional business.

ACTION 3.3: VR to share the latest design plans for the Diamond Creek Road intersection at the next CRG meeting.

ACTION 3.4: VR Property Services to attend a PCAG meeting to go over the land acquisition compensation process with impacted landowners.

Item 4 – 'Key topic' discussion

JJ and PH presented a proposal by a local resident requesting a service road between Laurie Street and Bannons Lane be incorporated into the Stage 2 design. JJ said she supported the proposal, highlighting this section of Yan Yean Road is the only high-density housing with direct access onto Yan Yean Road. BM thanked JJ for bringing the proposal to the CRG. BM said that people tend to focus on solutions, rather than look at the problem and desired outcomes, then come up with a range of workable solutions. BM said the issue is ingress and egress and, to a lesser extent parking, and the project team would come up with solutions to address this that adhere to safety guidelines. As the road is 70km/h, direct access meets these guidelines

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but the service road proposal has altered the access at Laurie Street and Bannons Lane and has removed the U-turn bay on Yan Yean Road and left turn lane into Bannons Road. Given the size and position of the properties in this location, any land acquisition to include a service road would have a significant impact on these landowners. Options that can be explored include looking into rear access arrangements or partial service lanes instead of a service road. PH thanked VR for the opportunity to present the service road proposal to the CRG and have it seriously considered by the project team.

BM acknowledged that it is difficult to visualise the completed design and the impact the upgrade will have, with people tending to picture the existing traffic situation only with a median barrier in the centre. BM stressed the improvement the increased road capacity and two lanes in each direction will have.

BM said the team did not want to create a situation where people are less safe. Currently people can't safely back a horse float out onto Yan Yean Road. The upgrade won't make that activity any less safe. Wherever possible, the design aims to improve safety and accessibility. The same can be said for concerns around access changes.

JJ concerned that at a 70km/h speed limit, people may travel at 90km/h and ingress and egress between Laurie Street and Bannons Lane won't be safe. BM suggested VR could look at adding indented bays to reverse into and come out safely. This solution would provide a bit more freedom as opposed to a service road, which would need a safety barrier that would only inhibit the turning space further.

BT asked if VR would discuss this service road proposal in more detail with the community. BM replied that VR began with initial conversations with landowners, then community sessions to reach those we hadn't spoken to yet, and now we can look into additional meetings with residents concerned over single issues. BM confirmed with PH that he had spoken directly with the resident who submitted to service road proposal. He said next the team would acknowledge what they have heard and detail the process to be followed to investigate the problem and options to address it.

JY wondered whether it was possible to enter Yarrambat Pony Club via Jorgensen Avenue to help people with horse floats avoiding the U-turn and instead using the new Jorgensen Avenue roundabout. JJ said it is actually Parks Victoria land which would be very difficult to gain access to. BM corrected that it is DELWP land that is managed by Parks Victoria but that is an option that was explored. VR did look to have a second access or move the main access there, and pushed hard for that, but it was rejected by the relevant authorities. This option would have required additional tree and vegetation removal, and we were unable to prove the benefits outweigh the drawbacks given there are several high value trees and a very high value tree that would need to be removed. ME said we mustn't compromise safety though for the sake of minimising tree removal at some locations.

Item 5 – Any other business

NF ran through the other items not yet covered on the PCAG list. She said that she would like more breaks in the median safety barriers so she can cross the road to visit her neighbours. NF said the PCAG wants signals at Browns/Faneco Lane and understands DvD is undertaking further investigations here. DvD said as part of the design we are future proofing this intersection. NF reported that BMD are using Browns Lane as a cut through and JJ responded that access had been reconfigured and that isn't an issue anymore.

JJ asked about access at Yarrambat Park with the new median strip, as she didn't want to ask Council for gates if the access will change during the upgrade. More kids are going to ride to Pony Club with the shared use path because it's safe. What will VR do to replace the fence? BM the fence might not be impacted; VR is talking to Council about most commonly used accesses for road user types. JJ asked we speak to her about this while we are speaking with Council as she can provide valuable input.

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NF asked if emergency services are being consulted. DvD confirmed they are and if police can clear it then anyone can as it is the lowest vehicle. JJ confirmed this is true.

NF reported PCAG wants all bus bays to be indented. Thinks the distances between signalised crossing points need to be shortened.

NF asked about retaining walls. DvD said that VR has provided a response to PCAG on each of the 26 proposed locations. In each instance, VR has come up with a solution to minimise impact to trees including retaining walls in the middle between carriageways. He said there is only one location where VR wouldn't include a retaining wall because the high cost was not justified given the low number of low value trees. CA added that there are 23 retaining walls in the current Stage 1 design. NF said now that VR had formally responded, she would address the issue with Council.

NF said she believed 65 nest boxes are not enough to provide temporary homes for wildlife. NK confirmed 110 hollows will also be reinstated in the area and VR are investigating carving artificial hollows too. NK - the nest boxes will stay after the project is complete, creating further habitat for local wildlife. NF claimed the nest boxes did not get installed prior to construction commencing. NK corrected that 25 went in prior to construction commencing.

NF asked if the shared use path can be constructed to go around the trees. DvD responded that a meandering path actually has a greater impact on the vegetation and reminded NF that he has responded to this point already. JJ said to NF that horses are allowed on that track so it has to be safe.

NF wanted to know if the safety audit is available to the public. DvD said no but he can talk through some points if the PCAG has questions.

NF wanted quietening materials used on the road. DvD explained it is a 1dB difference, which isn't detectable so won't be noticeable. He indicated that what will be noticed as a noise reduction is the newer smoother road surface.

ACTION 3.5: VR to provide answers to PCAG questions in a table and circulate to group members ahead of the next CRG meeting in June.

Item 6 – Close

WB asked if the next CRG meeting should be held on the 4 June or 18 June, since 11 June is a public holiday. The group confirmed 18 June. BT flagged that the 9 July meeting falls in the school holidays and asked if that was an issue for anyone? The group confirmed 9 July meeting is fine.

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Outstanding Actions		
Outcome / Action	Responsible	Due
<i>ACTION 3.1: VR to follow up with Council on date where overhanging trees will be dealt with and report back to group.</i>	CA	18 June 2018
<i>ACTION 3.2: VR to amend March CRG meeting minutes to clarify the PCAG formed following a community meeting and publish updated minutes on website.</i>	CC	9 July 2018
<i>ACTION 3.3: VR to share the latest design plans for the Diamond Creek Road intersection at the next CRG meeting.</i>	CA	18 June 2018
<i>ACTION 3.4: VR Property Services to attend 23 May PCAG meeting to go over the land acquisition compensation process with impacted landowners.</i>	TP, WB, NJ, DvD, CC	23 May 2018
<i>ACTION 3.5: VR to provide answers to PCAG questions in a table and circulate to group members ahead of the next CRG meeting in June.</i>	DvD	18 June 2018