



DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES REPORT

21st November 2005

DSS1 DEDICATED PUBLIC ROADS FILE: * APV

SUMMARY:

Reporting on the extent of the maintained lengths of dedicated public roads.



Council has previously been advised that presently it has approximately 900km of dedicated public roads and that traditionally only 585km are maintained by Council. Council has also been made aware that in addition to this there are many kilometres of crown road reserves and forestry roads, used by the public to gain access to properties, that are not Council's responsibility and are not maintained by Council. State Forests due to a contraction of logging operations have curtailed maintenance on some roads that service private residents.

Swan Lane and Silverwood Road are two examples only of Crown Roads that service properties for which Council receives maintenance requests but for which Council is not the responsible Road Authority.

Council continues to receive many complaints and requests regarding the condition of its unsealed rural roads. As a result of rainfall, lack of gravel pavement depth, inadequate maintenance and gravel re-sheeting funding, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain the presently maintained unsealed road network to the level of service that satisfies community expectations which are increasing.

As has been reported previously, requests are continually being received for Council to extend its maintained road network to include roads that are not currently maintained by Council. Whilst it is difficult for Council to not agree to requests for extension of the unsealed road network, the reality is that funds are not available to extend the roads currently maintained.

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Council is aware that Councils overall local road funding at present needs to be increased by approximately 100% to maintain our existing road network to an acceptable standard. This situation is becoming increasingly serious.

It is considered desirable for Council to have a means of comparing relative priorities for requests on its scarce resources. Criteria for asset acquisition or extension of maintenance responsibilities should be used to set priorities. This then could be used to assess any requests for extending the extent of Councils maintenance obligations.

Council should take into account the following criteria:

1. Evidence of community demand for the extension of the length of road to be maintained or acquired;
2. The strategic worth of the asset and its benefit to the broader community;
3. Whether the asset provides a "return";
4. The extent to which the provision of that asset is subsidised by the community, through rate revenues.

In addition, the long-term ownership costs need to be taken into account, and should include:

1. Acquisition or construction costs;
2. Maintenance profile and cost (over the ownership/life of the asset);
3. Alternate financing arrangements – user pay, grant, loan, private sector.

It is recommended that the above criteria should be considered in assessing all requests to acquire, construct or extend maintenance of Council Infrastructure.

As part of the preparation of an Asset Management Plan for Roads, a thorough review of the various lengths of roads and their category is currently being undertaken. However this is presently not yet finalized.

In 2001 a review of Council's roads infrastructure was undertaken. As part of this review, details relating to whether the road is formed, the number of dwellings and properties that are serviced, the cost to upgrade the road and the ongoing maintenance costs will be compiled so that the requests can be fully assessed and prioritised.

Attached at [\(Appendix A\)](#) is a list compiled in 2001 detailing approximate lengths of sections of roads that are dedicated public roads but are not presently maintained by Council. Note that this list should only be used as a guide and is not complete or verified. This list does not differentiate between sections of these non-maintained roads that are formed and those that are unformed.

It can be seen from the attached list that there are approximately 250 kilometres of Dedicated Public Road for which Council, as the Roads Authority, has responsibility for the maintenance of those sections but for which Council does not have the financial resources to maintain. Approximate costs to maintain only a minor road with low traffic volumes is \$1,500 per annum. Note that not all of the 250 kilometres of roads listed are presently formed or require active maintenance.

In recent years, Council has received requests to extend Council's maintenance limits on a number of Dedicated Public roads including the following:

- North Street, Gladstone
- Two Hills Lane
- Hickeys Creek Road
- Dungay Creek Road
- Pipers Creek Road
- Yessabah Road
- Browns Road
- Blewitts Lane
- Fishermans Reach Road
- Kawana Lane

REPORT IMPLICATIONS:

- ***Environmental***

Nil

- ***Social***

Nil

- ***Economic (Financial)***

There are no financial implications from the following recommendation.

- ***Policy or Statutory***

Nil

- *Director's Review*

Nil

RECOMMENDATION:

That the presently maintained unsealed road network not be extended until the adoption of the Asset Management Plan for Roads.

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A P Vermeulen
Acting DIRECTOR SHIRE SERVICES