

# ALL ROADS LEAD TO YARRIAMBIACK

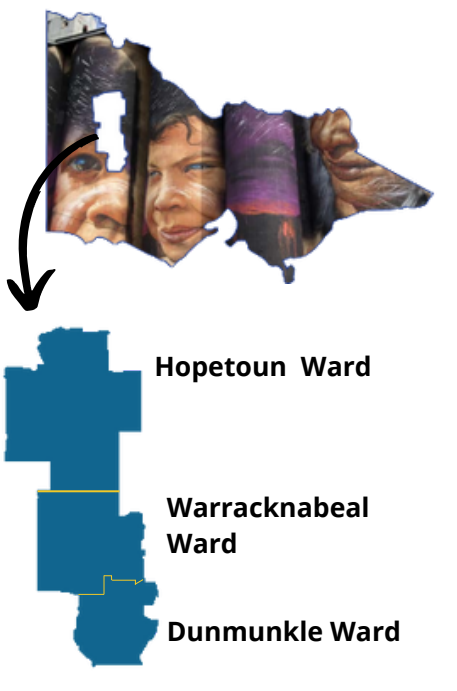
Transport priorities for a prosperous region



## At a glance:

- 6,556 residents
- 4,821Kms of roads
- 35% of Operational Budget and 52% of Capital Works Budget spent on roads & associated infrastructure

*"A connected rural community who values its land and wellbeing"*



Yarriambiack Shire is in the heartland of the Wimmera Southern Mallee in North West Victoria. Covering 7158 square kilometres of land, Yarriambiack is a major agricultural and food producing region, as well as providing a broad range of opportunities in other industries including education, construction, retail and tourism.

Home to the original Silo Art Trail, Yarriambiack Shire continually strives for excellence and aims to serve its community through strategic, sustainable and innovative projects.

Yarriambiack Shire Council is a proactive member of the Western Highway Action Committee and Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Group and has a strong history of achievement through the previous regional transport strategies.

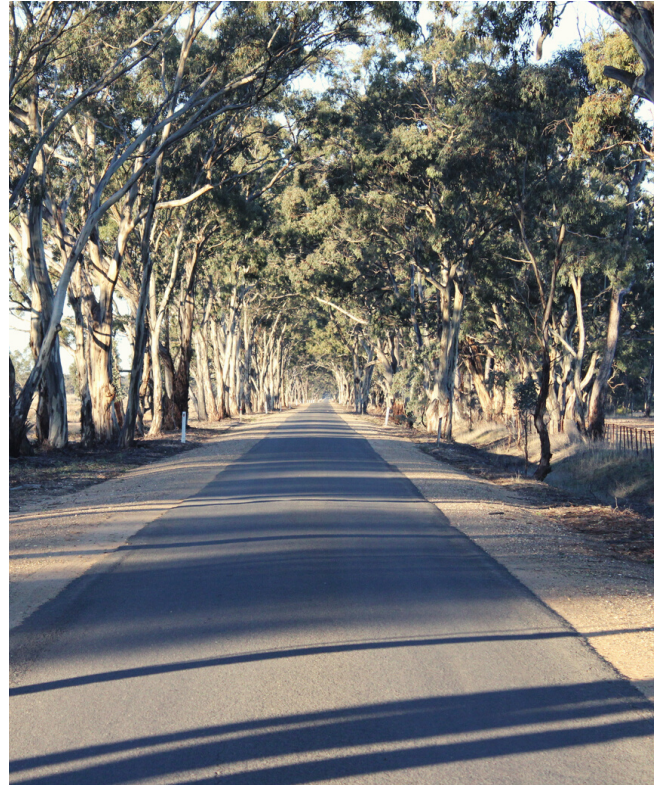
# The challenges

## Roadsides, vegetation and our industry

The treatment and management of native vegetation on roadsides is a complex component of road management. Local roads are experiencing vast regrowth along road verges and roadsides with municipalities unable to afford the planning process for vegetation management with also potentially excessive costs in meeting offsets.

The task of reducing the risk to road users (i.e. improving road safety) is compounded with the constraints and costs associated with roadside vegetation.

The cost associated with maintaining unimpeded access by removing or trimming impacting vegetation on lightly trafficked formed and unformed roads for agricultural purposes is onerous on municipalities and is not sustainable in the long term.



**Agricultural land is considered our “largest industrial complex”. Unimpeded access should not be considered any different to access to industrial complexes in urban areas.**

A regional issue that requires attention is how best to manage the conflict between native vegetation legislation and access for agricultural machinery. To maintain competitiveness, agricultural machinery and equipment is getting larger (i.e. field bins, headers, air seeders and trucks).

Roadside management of weeds by landowners is fast becoming nonexistent because of the complexities associated with pre-work requirements involving vegetation assessment and permit process; rural fire brigades are reluctant to undertake roadside burning as part of fire management also because of the pre-work requirements associated with vegetation assessment and permit process and the potential vulnerability of volunteers.



# The challenges

## Roads for the future

Yarriambiack Shire Council manages an extensive range of community assets in order to facilitate delivery of services to the community and allow products to be transported to market. With little public transport available, tourists, residents and businesses in the region are heavily dependent on road transport. The average number of motor vehicles per dwelling in the region is 2.6, compared to 1.7 in Victoria. In addition to this, there are 2,902 heavy rigid and 1,796 articulated trucks registered in the region, comprising of 3.71% and 7.34% respectively of these vehicles in Victoria.

The recent trend in agriculture is that farmers are expanding their operations and purchasing land remotely from their 'home block', requiring a greater volume of year-round movements of agricultural machinery on the roads and an increase in popularity in on-farm storage. As a result, this may lead to an increase in permit requests. The operation of the permit system under the Heavy Vehicle National Law needs to be streamlined and made easy to use by farmers. The road network is not designed specifically for the movement of agriculture machinery. Issues associated with the increasing widths of agricultural machinery, and the low clearance of some items, particularly field bins and scarifiers, are compounded on gravel roads.

**The size of machinery has been growing by 2-3% each year, triggering an increase in the number of required permits. The current approved width for agricultural equipment is 6.5m which requires a travel path at least 7m wide.**



### **B and C Class Roads**

The Wimmera Southern Mallee Regional Transport Group Supply Chain Strategy identifies the regional demand on C class routes for the movement of freight; the priority routes and identified upgrades deemed necessary to same are clearly identified for the attention of Regional Roads Victoria. C class routes hold much greater significance to the regional communities than their class rating suggests "i.e. Class C". Regional communities consider C Class routes as important to them as the interstate truck drivers consider A Class routes. In large areas of the region, the C class routes are the only arterial roads available. Emergency vehicles are forced to reduce speed to 80kms/hour on most C Class and some Council Roads, extending response time and putting the community at great risk.

The maintenance of C class routes, to an acceptable trafficable standard, is important to enable the routes to provide the level of service that is demanded of them. Attention is drawn to the following deficiencies identified on many regional C class routes:

- Narrow seal widths evidenced by severe seal edge effects, including damage, breakage and shoulder drop-off
- Poorly maintained sealed surface – potholing and failures, roughness and rutting;
- Poorly maintained shoulders
- Proximity of vegetation to the road envelope

# The solutions

A regional approach

## Key Ask:

- **Commitment of four year block funding for roadside vegetation management and weed control**

## Key Ask:

- **Funding for tree trimming on Council roads**
- **\$600k in first year**
- **\$300k ever year thereafter**

Yarriambiack Shire Council has adopted a strategic approach to planning and implementing active transport infrastructure. Council prides itself on working collaboratively with partner bodies and the local communities and industries to identify the current and future transport needs and challenges of the region.

The State Government and the Federal Government has clearly identified that all road authorities are responsible for reducing the road toll and for developing safer networks; project funding applications under the majority of programs now require a commitment to a “safe system approach”,



## MANAGING VEGETATION AND SUPPORTING AGRICULTURE

The Royal Commission into the 2009 Victorian bushfires resulted in two significant recommendations that relate to this issue, they are:

### RECOMMENDATION 60

The State amend the exemptions in clause 52.17-6 of the Victoria Planning Provisions to ensure that the provisions allow for a broad range of roadside works capable of reducing fire risk and provide specifically for a new exemption where the purpose of the works is to reduce bushfire risk.

### RECOMMENDATION 61

The State and Commonwealth provide for municipal councils adequate guidance on resolving the competing tensions arising from the legislation affecting roadside clearing and, where necessary, amend environment protection legislation to facilitate annual bushfire- prevention activities by the appropriate agencies.

*The enactment of these recommendations would assist municipalities significantly in the provision of vegetation management on roadsides. A regional approach to activating these recommendations is recommended.*

# The solutions

## Roads for Regional Growth



### **Key Ask:**

- **Commit and advocate to Federal Government for renewed and long term (4 year) funding programs**

Maintaining a safe road network that reflects our communities' priorities including the movement of agricultural machinery is paramount.

**Yarriambiack Shire is Australia's largest lentil growing region and second richest grain growing region. 90% of the region's lentils are exported overseas and solely rely on road freight for local export out of the municipality to rail and port.**

With the gross value of Australian agriculture increasing, growing conditions improving, Yarriambiack's agriculture industry is a vital component in the economy at a regional, state and national level.

To protect our road assets the following options need consideration:

- A collaborative approach to design and manufacture of local agricultural machinery that will potentially travel safely on the road and not damage the road or the equipment is recommended.
- Design regularly used routes with flatter cambers and sealed pavements and greater clearances to vegetation and roadside infrastructure; the impact of this approach is the overall impost of the high level of capital costs required and the corresponding ongoing maintenance costs.

Network planning is required to provide for Victoria's growing freight task and continuation of Rural and Regional Program funding is vital. This includes funding under the following programs:

- Roads to Recovery (Commonwealth Government)
- Bridges Renewal Program (Commonwealth Government)
- Fixing Country Roads (State Government)
- Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program (Commonwealth Government)
- Local Roads to Market Program (State Government)
- Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program (Commonwealth Government )
- Agrilinks Upgrade Program (State Government)

# The solutions

B and C Class Roads Fit For Purpose

## Key Ask:

- **Commitment to widen and maintain all C Class Roads**

Regional Roads Victoria, within the Department of Transport, generally maintains the arterial road network which typically link regional towns and caters for greater traffic volumes over longer distances. However, the local road network is a vital link, providing the connection between the arterial system and points of origin or destination, particularly in its role of connecting business to market.

Yarriambiack needs regional arterial roads that are made stronger, safer and more durable for future needs and environmental conditions.



## Priority C Class Roads For Maintenance

• Warracknabeal Dimboola Road	9.4km
• Warracknabeal Donald Road	6.4km
• Birchip Warracknabeal Road	17.75km
• Warracknabeal Rainbow Road	8.45km
• Jeparit Road	5km
• Glenorchy Road	3.3km
• Murtoa Donald Road	14.85km
• Birchip Rainbow Road	8.8km
• Hopetoun Walpeup Road	.4km
• Patchewollock Sea Lake Road	.6km
• Hopetoun Sea Lake Road	16.8km
• Hopetoun Rainbow Road	5.9km

# The solutions

## Heavy Vehicle Routes fit for purpose

Widening of the Heavy Vehicle Routes will ensure that the roads meet current and future transport needs for all industries.

### Key Ask:

- **\$3.6m funding per year to widen Heavy Vehicle Routes to 6.6m**

The costs associated with upgrading Yarriambiack Heavy Vehicle Route roads to a standard width of 6.6m are listed below.

### Priority 1 Roads

- Banyena Pimpinio Road \$6,924,440
- Dimboola Minyip Road \$2,097,320
- Lascelles West Road \$2,983,708
- Longerenong Road \$1,476,056
- Minyip Banyena Road \$1,694,274
- Minyip Dimboola Road \$2,864,277
- Sea Lake Lascelles Road \$3,340,097

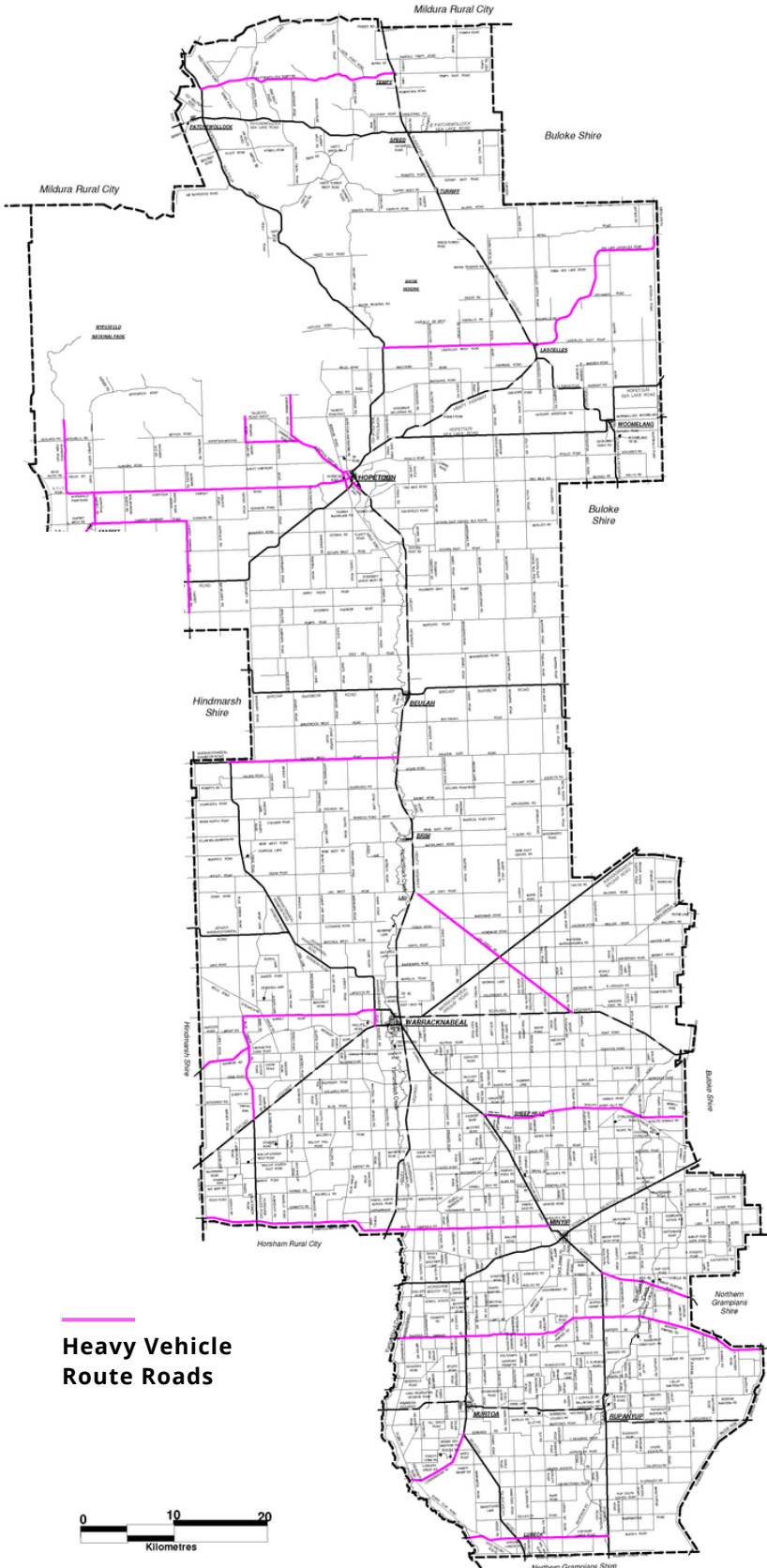
### Priority 2 Roads

- Hopetoun Yaapeet Road \$5,304,447
- Horsham Lubeck \$2,683,082
- Patchewollock Tempy Road \$3,691,113

### Priority 3 Roads

- Antwerp Road \$1,025,966
- Aubrey Road \$2,515,053
- Blue Ribbon Road \$2,115,316
- Boolite Sheep Hills Road \$2,420,165
- Cambacanya Road \$193,850
- Galaquil West Road \$3,251,502
- Golf Links Road \$42,162
- Hopetoun West Road \$96,463
- Lah Angle Road \$1,250,242
- Sheep Hills Warracknabeal Road \$570,640
- Wirribial Road \$955,881
- Wyperfeld Park Road \$2,786,250
- Yaapeet Kenmare Road \$4,163,036

**Total Investment: \$54,445,340**



# The solutions

Bridges for the future of regional living and industry



**The two major bridges in the Shire extend over Yarriambiack Creek in Warracknabeal and connect the east of the Shire and the state to significant agriculture enterprises to the West.**

The widening of the major bridges in Warracknabeal future proof the region's major industries of agriculture, freight transport and tourism.

The necessary investment for upgrading major bridges in Council's network requires a collaborative approach from all levels of government.

Dimboola Road Bridge requires the removal of the footpath and widening of the road. Rainbow Road Bridge is currently a single road bridge. To meet current and future needs this bridge requires a removal and rebuild of a two-way lane access bridge.

## **Key Ask:**

- ***Upgrades to key bridges to unlock tourism and industry opportunities***

Within the road network there are major structures that cross waterways including the Dimboola Road Bridge (left) and Rainbow Road Bridge (below).

In some cases, bridges or culverts may not have the capacity to cater to larger, heavier trucks that are becoming more common across the Shire. This may lead to load limits on these structures until they can be upgraded.

Council's current and future priorities for bridges consider priority freight routes and the increasing use of wider farm machinery and the evolving farm ownership model across multiple geographic locations.

