

A Bill for an Act relating to Rural and Regional Road Quality and Safety Bill 2020.

To be enacted by the YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament;

## **Monitoring of Rural and Regional Road Quality and Safety Bill 2020**

A Bill for an Act to establish a delegated commission within VicRoads to examine and maintain the quality of rural roads within Victoria. This body shall use a road index to prioritise which roads most urgently require maintenance, while working with construction companies to ensure a sustainable and effective renovation. In turn, the commission shall cooperate with drivers and community members alike to further examine issues of importance for rural and regional roads.

This Bill was written under notions of promoting rural and regional road maintenance and overall quality through examining and improving roads based on their overall safety, as opposed to usage. Through fixing dangerous roads, the overall road toll in Victoria is in turn expected to fall, thus promoting the welfare of the community.

## PART I—Preliminary

### Clause 1 Purpose

The main purposes of this Act are—

- (a) to lower the road incident toll in Victoria, thus improving the welfare of the community, while avoiding unnecessary economic expenditure;
- (b) to improve the safety of regional and rural roads in Victoria;
- (c) to ensure that reconstructive measures taken for rural roads are environmentally and economically sustainable.

### Clause 2 Commencement

This Bill shall commence upon receiving assent from the Youth Governor of Victoria.

### Clause 3 Definitions

In this Bill, we define the following to mean—

- (a) **rural road** means a road located in a regional area that experiences low volumes of daily traffic;
- (b) **Rural Road Quality Commission (RRQC)** means a delegated body of VicRoads, responsible for overseeing the quality and safety of rural and regional roads in Victoria;
- (c) **dangerous road** means a road which poses harm to those which use and drive on the road, with the degree of danger being extrapolated from crash statistics;
- (d) **road user** means a person on a road using any kind of vehicle, inclusive of but not limited to car drivers, heavy vehicle drivers, motorcyclists and cyclists;
- (e) **environmentally sustainable** means the preferential use of materials in road maintenance with the smallest environmental impact, and which can be readily replenished;

## PART II—Establishment

### Clause 4 Establishment of the external body

- 4.1 The Rural Road Quality Commission (RRQC) shall be established to oversee, monitor, and advise on the overall road quality and safety of roads throughout Victoria.
- 4.3 The power delegation given to the RRQC shall allow it to complete tasks in relation to its purpose through collaboration with transportation departments of the Government and VicRoads.

### Clause 5 Road Index

- 5.1 The Road Index Information shall be used by the RRQC to advise VicRoads of which roads are a priority to be fixed.
- 5.2 VicRoads shall produce a plan to have these roads fixed within the next three years.

- 5.3 The Road Index information shall also be used to recommend the speed limit of a road. This is determined by—
  - (a) statistics of incidents on said road;
  - (b) opinions and feedback from local residents.
- 5.4 In the event of any accidents or a resident complains about these roads in the period between inspections, a note shall be will filed and the danger index of the road shall be automatically increased until it is fixed.
- 5.5 Roads will be rated directly before, directly after and 6 months after construction has occurred. If there are serious issues at the 6-month follow-up, appropriate measures will be taken to reduce risk.

**Clause 6 Maintenance and sustainability of roads**

- 6.1 The quality of roads shall be assessed according to, but not limited to the following measures—
  - (a) the number of physical deteriorations;
  - (b) the timeframe to when the road was constructed;
  - (c) the construction materials of the road.
- 6.2 All roads shall be rated at least twice a year by agents from the RRQC.

**Clause 7 Responsibility of construction companies and road practitioners**

- 7.1 Quality guidelines shall be outlined by the Road Index and must be complied with by third party construction companies.
- 7.2 Financial penalties may apply in the event of misdemeanour and are to be issued at the discretion of the RRQC.
- 7.3 Constructional companies and road practitioners shall follow the subsequent instructional design methodology—
  - (a) Companies are required to follow procedures to ensure road users are aware of reconstruction efforts, and execute internal maintenance and quality assurances to be crossed checked and approved by the RRQC;
  - (b) Third parties are to use signage to inform road users of maintenance efforts.

**Clause 8 Role of Drivers and Road Users**

- 8.1 All new road users must take the updated Hazards Perception Test and a defensive driving course before obtaining the Probationary License Test, which will be included in the overall registration fees.
- 8.2 The Course shall remain open and optional for other road users.

**Clause 9 Responsibilities of the Community**

- 9.1 The RRQC shall establish a community submissions portal to facilitate community submissions and engagement in regard to road maintenance efforts.

- 9.2 Submissions will be accepted both online and via mail and shall remain open for lodgement all-year round. Submissions must be accompanied with the contact details, postcode, and residential address of the community member. If a response is requested, the RRQC will respond within seven business days
- 9.3 Community members are responsible for being cognisant of any enforcement action undertaken by the RRQC to enforce the Road Index.

**Clause 10 Enforcement of Road Index**

- 10.1 There shall be an increase in monitoring of regional and rural roads under construction and/or reconstruction.
- 10.2 High risk crash areas shall have increased speed camera presence. If common infractions are recorded in specific areas (of construction and reconstruction), there will be increased officer presence in those areas and financial penalties shall be applied.
- 10.3 Drivers will be held responsible for both direct and unintentional interference in rural and regional road reconstructive efforts including—
  - (a) Irresponsible speed control along reduced speed construction areas;
  - (b) Physical and verbal obstruction that interrupts the constructive and/or reconstructive efforts of construction companies.