

Please Quote: VRPC009148
(File No: PC041913)

Ms Rachel Nicol
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Ms Nicol

INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEATH OF SAMUEL CHILTON – COR 2019 000849

I refer to your letter dated 8 January 2020, addressed to Ms Robyn Seymour, regarding the investigation in the death of Samuel Chilton. Your letter has been forwarded to me for investigation and response.

Regional Roads Victoria (RRV) wishes to convey its sincere condolences to Mr Chiltern's family.

The Coroner's recommendations include:

With the aim of promoting public health and safety, I recommend that VicRoads and the City of Warrnambool review cycling infrastructure along Princes Highway, Allansford giving consideration to how cyclists including children cycle along Princes Highway and into Allansford town centre.

The Princes Highway at this location is in a rural setting and has a one metre sealed shoulder available for use by cyclists adjacent to the through traffic lanes. There are no separated bicycle lanes or off-road bicycle paths, nor are there any formalised bicycle crossing points due to the historically low cyclist usage in this area.

With the recommendation in mind, officers from RRV and Warrnambool City Council undertook a joint inspection of the location on 28 January 2020, to identify any possible short-term improvements to improve road safety for cyclists using the Princes Highway corridor near Allansford. A short-term action is addressed below but it is also useful to advise the Court of the long-term planning for the Allansford township.

RRV is aware that Council is currently undertaking a strategic framework plan for the township of Allansford. This plan will set the long-term vision for the future growth and development of Allansford. Community consultation and input from relevant agencies, such as RRV, are key to the study. RRV will be providing input into this plan which will include long term strategic direction into the issue of safety for all road users as they access the township of Allansford. Implementation of actions arising from the plan will be subject to budget and funding allocations being made available over the longer term.

A future shared bicycle path / footpath along the rail corridor south of the Princes Highway is one option being suggested for further investigation. This would provide a safer facility for cyclists travelling between Allansford and Warrnambool.

In addition, the Princes Highway Corridor Strategy was released in November 2019 by the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development (<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/roads/princes-highway>). This strategy highlighted 14 initiatives required to improve the safety and operation of the Princes Highway and provides a 'whole of corridor' perspective of the current and future role of the Princes Highway as a transport route.

A detailed Investment Plan is required to be developed to identify and prioritise a program of upgrades to the Princes Highway so as to implement each of the initiatives identified within the strategy. RRV (part of The Department of Transport) is currently in the process of applying for funding from the Australian Government for the development of this Investment Plan. Once funding is provided, improvements to bicycle infrastructure on the Princes Highway adjacent to Allansford will be considered as part of the development of the Princes Highway Investment Plan.

RRV acknowledges that these initiatives are part of a longer-term strategy and do not offer immediate solutions. To mitigate this, in the short-term, RRV will install cyclists warning signs in this area to raise driver awareness that cyclists may be using this section of road. These will provide a visual cue to drivers to be aware of cyclists on a road that may typically not be viewed by drivers as being frequented by cyclists.

Should you require any further information, Mr Sam Pirrotta, Manager Transport Planning at RRV's South Western Region [T: (03) 5225 2543] E: sam.pirrotta@roads.vic.gov.au] would be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



LIAM BUTCHER
ACTING REGIONAL DIRECTOR – SOUTH WESTERN REGION

8 / 4 / 2020