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11 September 2020

Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Via e-mail: <cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au>

Attention: Coroner Jacqui Hawkins

Re: Coroner Jacqui Hawkins's 'Report without Inquest' into the death of Julie-Ann M Johnston - COR 2018 003524 - 30 July 2020

I am writing to acknowledge that Maroondah City Council is in receipt of Coroner Jacqui Hawkins's 'Report without Inquest' into the death of Julie-Ann M Johnston - COR 2018 003524 - 30 July 2020 (Findings Report).

Firstly, on behalf of Council I would like to offer our sincerest condolences to the family of Mrs Johnston. This was a very unfortunate accident that impacted the local community, in particular the traders within the Croydon Main Street precinct. Council was contacted by a number of local traders when the accident occurred to express their concerns regarding the fatality and communicate their support for overall improvements to pedestrian and traffic safety in precinct.

In regard to the recommendations of the Findings Report I can confirm that Council accepts Recommendation 40 and will work with the parties listed in the report, being Department of Transport and Metro Trains, to undertake a safety audit within the bus interchange and at the Council road interface "Pierson Drive" and determine possible safety improvements. As the accident occurred within the bus interchange on land owned and managed by the Department of Transport, Council is of the view that the Secretary of the Department of Transport is best placed to commence and lead the investigation to implement the recommendation.

Council acknowledges Recommendation 41, that the findings of the investigation will be published in writing.

Further to the contents of the Findings Report, and any safety issues subsequently identified through the safety audit investigation, I can advise that Council is aware of a number of challenging traffic and pedestrian safety issues within the Croydon Railway Station precinct. Council considers that these issues are a result of 'legacy' arrangements that have come about through the evolution of the supporting transport infrastructure within the Croydon Railway Station land and the surrounding precinct including; bus interchange arrangements that existed long before appropriate current day traffic engineering standards applied; the highly constrained road reservation widths and unusual road geometry; and property boundary locations with private buildings located hard up against roadways restricting opportunities to carry out road and pedestrian improvements. It is considered that a number of these precinct based issues pose ongoing safety risks to pedestrians and traffic that cannot be effectively resolved without major land-use change / redevelopment that includes addressing the configuration of the Croydon Railway Station.

Contact us

Phone 1300 88 22 33 or 9298 4598 **Fax** 9298 4345

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In recognition of the major precinct based redevelopment required to address these above constraints and resolve the safety issues, Council has been advocating to the Victorian State Government for inclusion of the redevelopment of the Croydon Railway Station in the Victorian State Government Level Crossing Removal / Rail Grade Separation program. To support this advocacy Council commissioned a study which found that rail grade separation can only be achieved by an elevated rail that will require the full redevelopment of the existing rail station and surrounding precinct. The study recognised the associated benefits of the rail station redevelopment through the creation of improved pedestrian, cycling and road infrastructure that will connect an activity centre precinct which is currently divided by the rail station. The report also critically identified that the redevelopment of the rail station would create an opportunity to relocate the existing rail station bus interchange to resolve the pedestrian safety issue described in the Findings Report.

I also note that the proposed Croydon Rail Station grade separation project will be included in the new Maroondah Council Structure Plan for Croydon, which is currently under development.

It is therefore considered that the Croydon Railway Station grade separation proposal will provide an unparalleled opportunity for the Victorian State Government and Maroondah City Council to revitalise the Croydon Major Activity Centre, whilst also addressing the challenging traffic and pedestrian safety issues around the Railway Station that are difficult to resolve within the current site constraints. For your information I attach a copy of a presentation made to State Minister Jacinta Allan in November 2017 which outlines the Croydon Rail Grade Separation proposal.

If you require any further information Council's Coordinator Engineering Services & Strategy Steven O'Brien or I would be pleased to assist. I can be contacted on telephone 9298 4303, or email andrew.taylor@maroondah.vic.gov.au, or alternatively Steven O'Brien can be contacted on telephone 9298 4247 or email steven.obrien@maroondah.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

ANDREW TAYLOR
MANAGER ENGINEERING & BUILDING SERVICES

Cc: Steve Kozlowski, Chief Executive Officer, Maroondah City Council

Enc: Preliminary Investigation into Grade Separation of Coolstore Rd & Improvements to Croydon Town Centre
Presentation to Minister Jacinta Allan
November 2017

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