

Jumping Creek Road: major works planned

Words and picture by
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Manningham Council has approved a draft strategy for an \$18 million upgrade of Jumping Creek Road from Warrandyte to Wonga Park. Work is anticipated to start in about five years. The draft document will be available to the public from Monday, July 25 and council will receive written submissions until Friday, September 16.

"Jumping Creek Road is a council link road and provides an important link between the Warrandyte and Wonga Park communities. It carries 7600 vehicles per day and traffic volumes are expected to grow with further development to the east," Lydia Wilson, Manningham chief executive, told the *Diary*.

"The horizontal and vertical alignment along Jumping Creek Road is generally substandard and requires improvement. Trees and open drains are located close to the edge of the road, posing safety issues.

"In the five year period between 2005 and 2009, there were 12 crashes resulting in casualties on Jumping Creek Road, including one fatality. These statistics do not include the numerous crashes resulting in property damage which are not reported to police," Ms Wilson said.

The *Diary* believes that around a dozen Jumping Creek Road residents were called to a meeting with council early last month where plans were displayed for the road rebuild. They were told that parts of their property would need to be acquired for the new road alignment. One estimate is that these would range from a small incursion up to around 100m².

Jumping Creek Road is called upon to be many things to many people.

- a picturesque country road
- the sole road access to Warrandyte State Park's Jumping Creek Reserve
- a handy route from Warrandyte to Wonga Park
- access for residents
- a through way for commuters and truck drivers from residential and commercial developments to the east of Wonga Park.

Manningham council notes other uses in the plans for Jumping Creek Road.

"There are also inadequate provi-

sions for equestrian, pedestrian and bicycle users along Jumping Creek Road and provisions for these users are needed," Ms Wilson said.

"The high fire risk associated with Wonga Park and Warrandyte and (the) need to provide safe access routes to and from these communities are also drivers for road improvements."

Thirty years ago Jumping Creek Road was a 100km/h country road. As traffic increased the speed limit was reduced and is now 60km/h.

Some much needed improvements have already been carried out on the road. In 1999 it was closed to through traffic for six months while a new concrete bridge was built over the creek. The old one was an anachronism, a wooden structure with bitumen on wooden planks. On winter mornings black ice on the bitumen surface led to some heart-stopping moments for motorcyclists.

Other improvements including road shoulders have been stabilised and extended and a white line added to the road edge. A section at the rear of Warranglen Nurseries has been widened.

Jumping Creek Road has many fine indigenous trees and shrubs growing along its edge, including box and gum eucalypts and wild cherry. Some of these carry the scars of vehicle collisions.

"Of course, any improvements to Jumping Creek Road need to minimise disturbance to sensitive vegetation along roadside areas and to the aesthetics of the environment," Ms Wilson said.

The *Diary* believes that up to 168 trees will be removed during road works.

Jumping Creek Road bisects part of Warrandyte State Park and fauna often cross the road.

"There are two or three distinct (kangaroo) mobs in the area. Some live over the river side of Jumping Creek Road and others that are in the (State) Park on the other side of Jumping Creek Road," Wonga Park resident Keri Fairley told the *Diary*.

"There are two or three (wildlife) corridors: one comes down just above the bridge and goes into the State Park there and there is one further up ... you come around a sweeping bend and it is just a

little bit further up before you get to Hooper Road."

Other wildlife needing to cross the road include possums, wombats and echidnas.

The creek is a major wombat crossing point and ironically the building of the new bridge may have reduced wombat deaths. The new bridge is higher than the original and it appears that the animals are using the old structure to cross under the road.

"As part of the development of the draft strategy, Manningham council officers engaged a consultant, who undertook a flora and fauna assessment and net gain analysis of the

Jumping Creek Road Reserve, including the interface with Warrandyte State Park," Ms Wilson said.

"A copy of the flora and fauna assessment is included in the draft strategy. The consultant reports also identify actions for consideration to minimise the impacts of the works on local fauna."

At this stage Manningham council expects to fully fund this project.

"If the state government Roads to Recovery program is extended past 2016 the funds allocated to Manningham council will be directed to Jumping Creek Road.

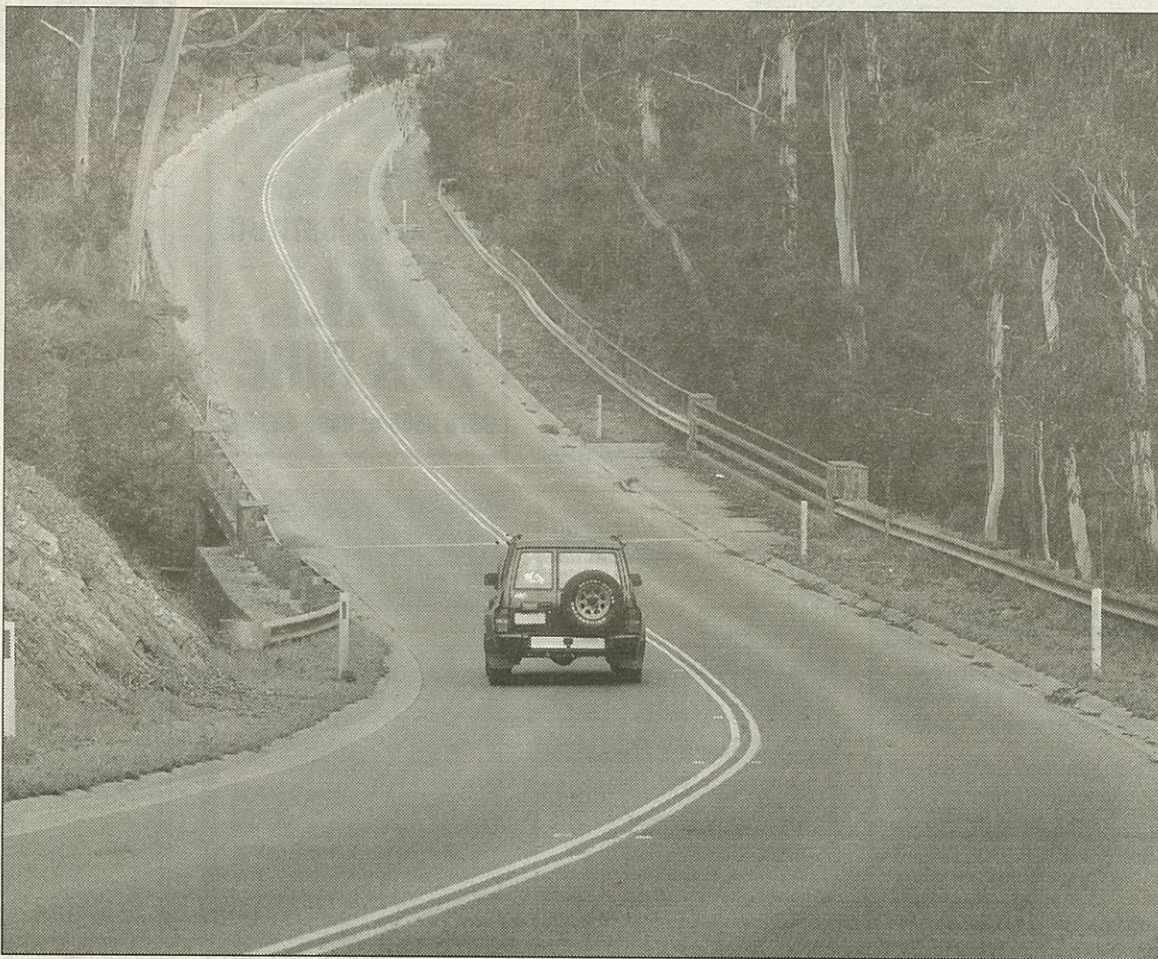
"Subject to confirmation, it is currently anticipated that funds could

be made available to commence the construction of Jumping Creek Road in the 2016/2017 financial year," Ms Wilson said.

The draft strategy will be available from the council office or the website (www.manningham.vic.gov.au) from Monday, July 25 and council will receive written submissions, via email or post, until Friday, September 16.

"Following this process, council will consider community comment on the strategy," Ms Wilson said.

"Further community consultation would be required in respect of the development of the detailed design for the road before construction could commence."



Picturesque Jumping Creek Road is set for extensive upgrading.