

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings

Portfolio:	Minister for Roads / Road Safety and the TAC
Witness:	Minister Jaala Pulford
Committee member:	Mr Sam Hibbins MP
Page/s of transcript:	10-11

Relevant text:

Is there a unit called the active transport unit? How many people sit within that unit?

Answer:

Active Transport Victoria (ATV) was established by the Andrews Government in 2016 in support of its commitment to improve walking and cycling in Victoria. ATV currently has two full time staff and leverages active transport capacity and expertise across government.

Active transport functions are embedded throughout the Department of Transport across policy, planning, project development, project delivery, and operation of Victoria's transport network.

People from across the Department of Transport are contributing to the delivery of our agenda for cyclists and pedestrians including:

- \$15.3 million to deliver Walking and Cycling upgrades - Stage 2 in the 2019-20 Budget;
- \$27.3 million to deliver St Kilda Road improvements separating pedestrians, cyclists and drivers on this significant corridor between Carlisle Street, St Kilda and the city;
- \$2.8 million for Active Transport Victoria to keep planning and providing advice on future projects that will benefit riders and pedestrians;
- \$100 million Safer Cyclists and Pedestrians Fund; and
- 250 kilometres of new or upgraded paths as a part of Major Transport Infrastructure program, with every new project also including new or upgraded infrastructure for cyclist or pedestrians.

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee | Inquiry into the 2019-20 Budget Estimates

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Relevant text:

I ask you to take this on notice: are you able to provide the committee with the final list of projects that are being delivered out of that fund?

Answer:

The Victorian Government is still finalising the full list of projects to be undertaken through the \$100 million Transport Accident Commission (TAC) Safer Cyclists and Pedestrian Fund.

The Fund includes:

- \$3 million for the Morwell to Traralgon Shared User Path than also includes a connection to the Latrobe Regional Hospital;
- \$7.9 million to complete a network of walking and cycling connections across Ballarat; and
- \$9.1 million for the Preston to CBD cycling corridor, commencing mid-2019.

In addition, the Victorian Budget 2019/20 commits:

- \$27.3 million to deliver St Kilda Road improvements separating pedestrians, cyclists and drivers on this significant corridor between Carlisle Street, St Kilda and the city; and
- \$15.3 million to deliver Walking and Cycling upgrades - Stage 2 in the 2019-20 Budget to deliver key upgrades for safer walking and cycling.

Finally, as the Member would be aware, every major new transport project – from North East Link to the West Gate Tunnel – now includes new or upgraded infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians.

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Relevant text:

The 250 kilometres of new and upgraded cycling paths in delivery, how many of those are on road separated bike paths? How many kilometres?

Answer:

The *Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28* sets out a vision for the future of cycling in the state and a pathway to deliver it. To increase the number, frequency and diversity of Victorians cycling for transport it seeks to invest in a safer, lower stress, better connected network, prioritising strategic cycling corridors.

Strategic direction 1.2 of the Strategy "*providing a lower stress cycling experience*" recognises that there are three types of infrastructure that will best provide for this outcome. The environment in which the cycling infrastructure is proposed is a determining factor on the treatment selection. The Strategy defines these as:

1. *Cycle Path* – An area open to the public which is protected from motor vehicles and which is for the use of people on bicycle only (in which case it is a bicycle path) or by pedestrians and people on bicycles (in which case it is a share use path);
2. *Cycleway* – A protected bicycle lane within a road reserve; and
3. *Shared Street* – a local road that is managed to provide safe conditions for cycling.

The Government's Major Transport Infrastructure Projects are delivering or have committed to deliver over 250 kilometres of new and upgraded cycling paths.

A number of these projects are still in development and as such a decision on the treatment has not been finalised. However, I am advised that based on current options being considered:

- 119 kilometres are proposed as a Cycle Path treatment
- 6 kilometres of Cycleway as 'on road separated bike paths'
- 134 kilometres are a combination of Cycle Path and on road bike lanes.

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Relevant text:

It goes to, I guess, your current expenditure on road projects versus pedestrian projects versus cycling projects. Out of your allocation of your annual appropriation, what percentage of that gets spent on projects for vehicles, projects for pedestrians and projects for cyclists?

Answer:

Projects within the Roads portfolio commonly include elements that support private vehicle, public transport, pedestrians, and cyclists. These components cannot be separately identified from a financial perspective.

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Relevant text:

Just a change of tack for the final question, and it goes to road maintenance and the use of recycled and recovered content in road maintenance. Given the waste crisis—and I know there are some pilot projects or I have seen some pilot projects—is this something that you are looking to roll out?

Answer:

VicRoads is working closely with industry and other key stakeholders, such as Sustainability Victoria, Office of Projects Victoria and the EPA to identify further opportunities for the use of recycled materials in road construction. It should be noted that Victoria is one of the Australian leaders in the use of recycled material in road construction.

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Committee member:	Ms Pauline Richards MP
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Relevant text:

Are there any other road infrastructure projects that are going to be included that you would like to provide more evidence to the committee about?

Answer:

Road safety improvement projects are being implemented across the State as part of the Towards Zero 2016-2020 Action Plan.

The program of work seeks to improve safety by preventing run-off-road and head on crashes, making intersections and local streets safer and improving safety for pedestrians and cyclists. \$282 million is being invested in road safety improvements across the 2019-2020 financial year.

An important part of the SSRIP program involves the rollout of flexible safety barriers on high risk roads across the state. Flexible safety barriers are being installed because they are extremely effective at preventing run off road and head-on crashes, which are the most common type of crash in rural Victoria. In 2018, VicRoads recorded approximately 3,251 hits on flexible safety barriers across the state.

The initial phase of projects included the "Top 20" program, which focused on reducing the likelihood and severity of crashes on 20 high risk rural roads across the state. The Top 20 program includes installation of over 2000km of flexible safety barriers, of which over 75% is complete.

On 11 February 2019, additional safety barrier projects were announced as part of Towards Zero. A further \$167 million has been invested to continue to address the issue of run-off-road and head-on collisions on high-speed roads – both in metro in regional areas.

In relation to improving safety at intersections, part of Towards Zero includes improving over 200 high-speed, high risk rural intersections across Victoria. Intersections pose a significant risk on our road network. In Victoria, 28% of deaths and 41% of serious injuries occur at intersections. If vehicles enter an intersection at a slower speed, they have more time to react to unexpected conditions. Slowing slightly when entering an intersection reduces the risk of being seriously injured or killed in a crash. Safety improvements that we are considering include improved line markings and signage, splitter islands, improved sight lines and roundabouts.

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Relevant text:

So have you got a proportion then of what the TAC would expect to fund of maintenance?

Answer:

The Andrews Government has doubled expenditure on regional road maintenance compared to the Coalition. For the 2013/14 Financial Year, the then Liberal/National Government allocated \$200 million for this program compared with the more than \$400 million this Government will be spending in the upcoming financial year on maintaining regional roads.

This is in addition to the massive \$1.4 billion investment the Andrews Government has made toward making our roads safer through the Safe System Roads Infrastructure Program.

Funding for road project delivery and maintenance will vary based on specific requirements from region to region and year to year. This, combined with the unpredictable nature of the infrastructure maintenance the TAC covers, makes it difficult to arrive at the proportion of funding undertaken by the TAC.

VicRoads delivers a range of programs and initiatives to maintain Victoria's freeways and arterial road network. For 2018-19, the total cost of all remediation works was \$622.5 million, of which the amount spent on barrier repairs represents only a small fraction.

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Relevant text:

Do we yet have an approximate cost on—I mean, I know my regular 200-kilometre trip home, I have lost count. I used to keep a little notepad on wire rope barrier breakages. Those installing them tell me they are actually more dangerous when they are sitting broken on the side of the road, so obviously there is a time pressure point to get them repaired. Do we have a running cost on what that maintenance cost is, Minister?

Answer:

Flexible steel guard fence and wire rope safety barriers are important features of our arterial network that protect road users involved in a crash. In Victoria, in the first five months of 2019, there were over 1,300 collisions with barriers that could have otherwise resulted in an accident causing serious injury or even death.

VicRoads inspects safety barriers as outlined in its Road Management Plan, which is available on its website.

VicRoads/Regional Roads Victoria's Road Management Plan recognises that we manage a large network of roads and specifies a different response time for the different types of road we manage.

When a barrier is damaged, immediate action is taken to place warning signs with repairs scheduled thereafter. On our urban freeways, the repair can be within a few days of a hit. Generally, across the state, repairs are completed within 28 days.

There are existing road safety barriers in addition to the new barriers being rolled out under the Towards Zero 2016-2020 Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan, which VicRoads/RRV maintains.

VicRoads delivers a range of programs and initiatives to maintain Victoria's freeways and arterial road network. For 2018-19, the total cost of all remediation works was \$622.5 million, of which the amount spent on barrier repairs represents only a small fraction.

Safety barriers have an estimated design life of 20 years for major structural components, including the wire, unless damaged.

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Relevant text:

Budget initiatives around cycling and walking—can you take us through them? I know the member for Prahran would be very interested in that. What are some of the budget initiatives in that space around cycling and walking?

Answer:

The 2019/20 State Budget committed a total of \$45.5 million to cycling and walking projects across the State. This includes:

- \$15.3 million to deliver the Government’s Walking and Cycling upgrades - Stage 2, which includes:
 - \$5 million for bicycle path upgrades connecting Heidelberg and Rosanna;
 - \$3.5 million for bicycle path upgrades on Woodland Street, Strathmore;
 - \$600,000 for pedestrian infrastructure upgrades at Bayview Terrace and Maribyrnong Road;
 - \$250,000 for pedestrian infrastructure upgrades at Hoffmans Road and Rosehill Road;
 - \$250,000 to plan the next phase of the Box Hill to Hawthorn strategic cycling corridor connection;
 - \$250,000 contribution towards further lighting upgrades on the Upfield Bike Trial, Brunswick; and
 - Progressing Kings Road bike path in Keilor North.
- \$27.3 million to deliver St Kilda Road improvements separating pedestrians, cyclists and drivers on this significant corridor between Carlisle Street, St Kilda and the city; and
- \$2.8 million to provide funding to Active Transport Victoria (ATV), a unit in the Department of Transport, to develop Victoria’s walking and cycling network.