



Department of Transport

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Ref: COR 2019 004927

Sheean Werkmeister
Coroner's Registrar
Coroners Court of Victoria
65 Kavanagh Street
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Dear Sheean

INQUEST INTO THE DEATH OF FANGZHOU SHI

I refer to your letter of 16 December 2021, seeking the Department of Transport's response to Recommendation 1 of Coroner Peterson's findings in the Inquest into the death of Fangzhou Shi (Court Ref. COR 2019 004927) and provide the following:

The Coroner's recommendation states:

Pursuant to section 72(2) of the Act, I make the following recommendations:

1. *That the Department of Transport conduct a safety review and audit of the Burwood Highway tram tracks in the vicinity of Milford Avenue. The review should:*
 - a. *consider the feasibility of erecting safety barriers and/or warnings along the sides of the tram tracks to discourage patients from crossing the highway between designated areas; and*
 - b. *consider the risks posed by planting along the sides of the tram tracks for tram driver visibility, and develop and implement strategies to ensure visibility for tram drivers is not impeded by the growth of bushes planted alongside the tram tracks. Such strategies might include:*
 - i. *implementing a schedule for regular maintenance checks to ensure the planting is trimmed back as necessary; or*
 - ii. *replacing tall bushes with planting that is unlikely to grow to heights that may impede visibility.*

In line with the Coroner's recommendation, the Department of Transport (DoT) has undertaken an onsite audit on 22 February 2022, and will work with the operator (Yarra Trams) to execute on the audit, which includes in its scope the matters identified by the Coroner (lighting, vegetation etc).

The audit's boundaries are between Warrigal Road/Burwood Hwy and Mahoney's Road/Burwood Hwy.

In 2022, Yarra Trams will conduct four other Road Safety Audits with DoT at priority locations.

It is also noted that an effective Safety Interface Agreement for this location will be established with relevant stakeholders - VicRoads, Council, DoT and Yarra Trams.

In response to 1b, I advise that Yarra Trams undertakes monthly inspections for line of sight with a focus around tram stops and signals. Vegetation work identified as DoT responsibility in accordance with the Road Management Act Code of Practice is passed on to DoT's road maintenance team for consideration. This process is currently in-formal and is managed through a common sub-contractor of Yarra Trams and DoT's Road Maintenance provider. DoT will ensure the current process is formalised.

In response to 1bi, DoT manages a vast network of roadside vegetation across the state and activities are being prioritised in accordance with its Road Management Plan.

Notwithstanding this, DoT shall ensure that the trimming of vegetation - to ensure sight lines are maintained for tram drivers - occurs on a periodic basis, no less that twice annually.

In response to 1bii, I advise that since the incident DoT has removed plantings at several locations along the Burwood Highway Tram line, as listed below.

- Garden beds located Inbound: Tanton Road; just after Blackburn Road; Tiller Street; La Frank Street (2 Beds); Pheasant Street; Finch Street; just after Elgar Road; and Ireland Street.
- Garden Beds located Outbound: Outside PLC (2 Beds); After Elgar Road; Yarra Bing Lane; Greenwood Street; and just after Middleborough Road.

DoT will undertake an investigation into replanting and/or removing of tall bushes and inappropriate vegetation along the Burwood Highway tram line, to be completed by mid-April 2022.

The recommendations of the investigation and Road Safety Audit will be submitted for funding, as per the normal process adopted for funding any proposed infrastructure improvements.

Should you require any further information on this matter, Ms Savoula Lidis, DoT's Director, Transport and Planning, Metro South East Region, (mob 0419 009 080) would be pleased to assist.

Yours sincerely



VINCE PUNARO

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR METRO SOUTH EAST
24/02/2022

