

9 September 2022

Colleen Bebbington  
Senior Coroner's Registrar  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
SOUTHBANK VIC 3006

Email: [cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au](mailto:cpuresponses@coronerscourt.vic.gov.au)

Dear Ms Bebbington,

**Re: Investigation into the death of [REDACTED] – COR 2021 001712**

I refer to your letter, dated 10 June 2022, enclosing a copy of Coroner Sarah Gebert's Finding without inquest into the death of [REDACTED]

A review of the Coroner's Report into the death of [REDACTED] has been undertaken and a response is attached to this letter outlining actions that have or will be undertaken in response to those recommendations.

Following receipt of the Coroner's Findings, an inspection of the accident site was undertaken by staff from Colac Otway Shire on the 24 June 2022. At that time the "dip" in the pavement was observed to be located approximately 800 metres from the intersection of Birregurra – Deans Marsh Road.

Council agrees with all the Coroner's recommendations and is committed to ensure compliance with those recommendations where matters are within Council's authority and to proactively advocate to others for compliance where needed.

Yours sincerely



**ANNE HOWARD**  
Chief Executive Officer



## Response to Recommendations

***41.(i) Hazard / Warning signage should be installed at the relevant section of Rifle Butts Road, Whoorel pending elimination of the dip, described by investigators as a sunken part of the road surface approximately 21 metres long***

The Coroner's recommendation has been implemented.

Council has installed the following warning signs:

(a) 3 x Uneven Surface warning signs (code: W5-43B) installed as follows:

- Downhill (eastern) approach - a sign has been installed on both sides of the road facing east, located 120 metres east of the dip; and
- Western approach - 1 sign has been installed on the left hand side, at 100 metres to the west of the dip.

(b) 60 km/h advisory signs (code: W8-2B) has been installed on both approaches.

The downhill approach has duplicated signs as it is the critical approach where braking is required to slow down to an advisory speed of 60 km/h.

The signs were installed on the 22 August 2022 as per photos below.



**41.(ii) Colac Otway Shire investigate the cause of the dip in the road and make repairs to eliminate the dip.**

The Coroner's recommendation will be implemented.

The reason for the subsidence cannot be determined at this time, however the area in the vicinity of the “dip” will be excavated and repairs undertaken to eliminate the “dip”. Rifle Butts Road pavement works have been measured, marked, and included in the 2022-2023 stabilisation program. An area of 282 square metres of pavement stabilisation has been identified in this location to be repaired. These works have been programmed to be undertaken between September and November 2022.

**41.(iii) Permanent hazard / warning signage should be installed at the relevant section of road should the dip become a recurring issue following repairs**

The Coroner's recommendation will be implemented.

Following completion of the road repair works the road will be inspected in accordance with Council's Road Management Plan and if required permanent signs will be installed in the vicinity of the accident site.

**41. (iv) The speed limit for the relevant section of road, including the lead up to the crest, should be reduced.**

The Coroner's recommendation is accepted by Council and implementation is being pursued with stakeholders and authorities.

Immediately following the accident Council installed temporary speed limit reduction signage to reduce the speed limit to 60 km/h. These temporary speed limit signs are currently still in place and will be until a decision has been made on a request to reduce the speed on this road from 100km/hr to 80 km/hr.

Whilst the accident location is within the Colac Otway Shire, Rifle Butts Road is located within the municipal boundaries of both Shires of Colac Otway and Surf Coast.



Council staff have met with the officers from the adjoining Surf Coast Shire to seek their support to have the speed limit on their section of Rifle Butts Road also reduced from its default speed limit of 100 km/hr to 80 km/hr, thereby establishing a consistent speed limit of 80 km/hr for the full length of the road..

Surf Coast Shire has advised that it supports a joint request to the Department of Transport to reduce the speed limit on Rifle Butts Road to 80 km/hr. An application is being prepared to submit a request to reduce the speed limit.

The implementation steps are as follows:

1. Determine the notional speed limit – Completed;
2. Undertake Stakeholder Engagement – to be undertaken with residents abutting the road and typically will take 1 month to complete;
3. Seek necessary approvals to change the speed limit – approval required from the Minister through the Department of Transport;
4. Once approved the changed speed zone signs can be installed within 2 weeks, and
5. Monitoring of the speed change is undertaken and speed data collected. This is an ongoing process.

