



Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group



Newsletter

Chair: James Bufton
5284-1344

Treasurer: Chris Winfield
5369-4214

Secretary: Allan Bartholomew
5369-4197

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Next Meeting: Roads vs vegetation?

Seven Deaths, 50 injured and 88 collisions in five years: Is the C704 Balliang's Killer Road?

Mr Alastair Robinson, Project Engineer, Vic Roads

Thursday, 16th June 2016 1930h,

Balliang Hall

Balliang-Bacchus Marsh Road (opposite CFA)

Most members and friends of Brisbane Ranges Landcare Group who live on the Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Rd (C704) will already have met Alastair who has been discussing possible road safety improvements to the C704 with immediately affected residents. Alastair is a civil engineer with qualifications in engineering, transport and town planning who has over 40 year's experience in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of roads and bridges throughout Victoria, predominantly working with VicRoads and its predecessors.

Alastair, and possibly other members of his team, have offered to talk in general terms about road building processes and some of the environmental factors that can influence decisions e.g. considering the "value" of removing environmental landscapes and the cost of offsetting this loss.

Residents along the Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Road have been impressed with Alastair and his team's effort to consult on patterns on road usage: heavy farm machinery and property access being of particular interest at this preliminary stage of planning for road safety improvements.

Balancing landcare values and road safety is not easy! Don't miss this chance to hear from an experienced civil engineer who has a unique perspective combining decades of experience together with local knowledge from consultations with many residents.

SAFETY IMPROVEMENTS FOR C704



Picture and story credit: Jessica Howard *Moorabool News*.

Balliang's main arterial thoroughfare, the Geelong Bacchus Marsh Road, has been identified as one of the State's most dangerous roads and stands to get a share of a \$340 million spend on 2500k of unsafe rural and regional roads.

Balliang's CFA members are all too aware of the many accidents, serious injuries and distressing loss of life that has occurred. The 12k stretch between Little River Ripley Road and Ballan Rd has been a particularly dangerous area. Inexplicably, many accidents have occurred on straight stretches of the road with good visibility and reasonable road surfaces.

Central road barriers of the type illustrated above are under consideration as one possible improvement. These have been shown dramatically to reduce the incidence of head-on collisions as they effectively separate light vehicles which may otherwise stray into an oncoming lane. On the other hand, there are criticisms of this safety measure from motor cyclists who stand to suffer serious injuries in the event of running into the barrier. Also barriers can adversely affect movement of heavy vehicles and pose access problems, for example for heavy farm machinery.

Safety improvements and reduction of accidents with their loss of life and horrendous injuries may come at the cost of sacrificing areas of unique or long-established vegetation. Making the trade-off between lowered risk of accidents and impact on vegetation is not an easy call.

On two occasions in the last ten years the magnificent red gum (pictured below) has been struck by vehicles which have run off the Geelong-Bacchus Marsh Rd near the intersection with Gilmores Rd. The floral memorial just visible on the trunk is maintained by the family of a lady killed in one of these accidents. This family continues to grieve over the loss of a much loved family member.

