

Nillumbik Shire Council Motions
Name of Motion: Wildlife Vehicle Collision Hotspots
Motion <i>The Motion should be no longer than 250 words (1700 characters)</i>
<p>That the State Government work with local councils to investigate and trial initiatives to reduce harm to wildlife and improve driver safety, particularly in key wildlife vehicle collision road corridors and hotspots.</p> <p>Initiatives may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Driver-behaviour education campaigns to help mitigate wildlife vehicle collisions, eg. wildlife signage, road markings, speed reduction• Investigation by Department Transport and Planning into virtual fencing and other fauna protection and management trials.• Targeted investment into protecting and enhancing refuge and core fauna habitat.
Rationale for Motion <i>Relevant background information in support of the motion. The rationale should be no longer than 350 words (2400 characters)</i>
<p>Many wildlife populations are in decline due to anthropogenic impacts from urbanisation and linear infrastructure. Roads form barriers to wildlife movement, severing habitat connectivity and isolating populations and individuals from resources and mates. This results in wildlife traversing roads. Subsequent wildlife/vehicle collisions can cause serious injury and death to both wildlife and humans.</p> <p>Research is being undertaken nationally and internationally into novel wildlife/vehicle collision mitigation methods, in the quest to identify methods that are successful and affordable, noting that there are many variables to be considered for different species and locations. Ongoing state government investment to support local research (and trials) into methods that will more successfully reduce collisions and harm in Victoria is needed; along with investment into broader implementation of proven initiatives along VicRoads and Council managed roads.</p>
Name of Motion: Stronger Deterrents for Illegal Vegetation Removal
Motion <i>The Motion should be no longer than 250 words (1700 characters)</i>
<p>That the State Government strengthens the deterrence of illegal native vegetation removal by increasing the powers of local Councils to effectively enforce, and respond to breaches of, their Planning Schemes under the Victorian Planning Provisions.</p>

- Increasing the powers of local Councils to effectively enforce, and respond to breaches of, their Planning Schemes under the Victorian Planning Provisions. This would include:
 - Enabling authorised Council officers to enforce cessation of illegal vegetation removal in real time or the immediate cessation.
 - Ensuring offenders of illegal vegetation removal are legally required to provide native vegetation offsets.
- Reviewing the value of infringements for native vegetation removal
- Strengthening the role of Fines Victoria in recovering fines for illegal vegetation works.

Rationale for Motion *Relevant background information in support of the motion. The rationale should be no longer than 350 words (2400 characters)*

Native vegetation plays a critical role in protecting biodiversity, providing food and shelter for wildlife, helping control erosion, and improving water quality. It is a unique and valued feature of our landscapes, particularly in rural and peri-urban regions of the state like Nillumbik, that often comprise large parcels of land designated as Green Wedge.

Under the Planning and Environment Act it is illegal to remove native vegetation without a permit. Local Councils are responsible for enforcing breaches of the Act through their planning schemes as part of the Victorian Planning Provisions. However, current powers limit the enforcement action that councils are able to undertake, and fines for breaches are often not high enough to deter people from illegally removing vegetation.

When fines are issued, they are often significantly less than what Councils spend resourcing enforcement action. When infringements are issued by the Magistrates Court, they are referred to Fines Victoria. However, fines are frequently not paid and get lost in the system. Councils also find it difficult to recover fines through Fines Victoria.

Councils spend a lot of time trying to negotiate on-ground remediation outcomes including voluntary native vegetation offsets. Outside of these voluntary measures, Councils have the ability to try and seek enforcement orders at VCAT. However, again, this has significant impacts on budgets and resources, and costs are often not recouped, even in the event of costs applications being made.

Councils spend significant time and resources undertaking valuable work and producing important strategies, including Urban Tree Canopy, Neighbourhood Character and Biodiversity strategies, to protect biodiversity values and vegetation.

Support in the deterrence of illegal vegetation removal, as outlined above, will support that investment and ensure better outcomes are achieved for our community and the environment.

Name of Motion:
Roadside Maintenance Coordination and Financial Support

Motion The motion should be no longer than 250 words (1700 characters)

That the State Government increases support to local Councils to enable maintenance and amenity of roadside reserves in a timely manner, reflective of local community expectations by:

- Increasing funding for Councils that are required to maintain roadside reserves on VicRoads' behalf, to better reflect the true costs of those maintenance works.
- Establishing a coordinated approach involving forward planning of roadside mowing works, whereby works on areas where VicRoads and local Council managed sections intermingle are completed in their entirety.

Rationale for Motion *Relevant background information in support of the motion. The rationale should be no longer than 350 words (2400 characters)*

Management of roadside reserves is essential not just for aesthetic value, but to improve visibility for drivers and reduce fire risk.

Many local councils, particularly those in outer metropolitan and rural regions, are responsible for the management of roadsides spanning hundreds of kilometres. In addition to this, many are also required to maintain the roadsides of VicRoads managed roads, as part of a special arrangement whereby councils may be provided with additional funding to undertake the work.

With rate capping tightening the budgets of councils across the sector, the funding provided through road maintenance arrangements with the State has not kept up with the costs of providing this important service.

Many roadsides are often located in areas with high tourism volumes, and increased fire risk. Resident concerns and complaints will often escalate where those roadsides are not being managed to community expectations.

In the case of roads where councils and VicRoads share management of the roadside, issues arise where sections of roadside are maintained at different intervals. While local councils and VicRoads understand the exact sections they are responsible for maintaining, residents do not, and become frustrated when they see a job 'half-done', which ultimately results in complaints to councils around unsightliness, traffic hazards and fire risk.