

## CODE OF PRACTICE – MANAGEMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN ROAD RESERVES

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### What is the purpose of the Code?

The Code provides practical guidance and identifies benchmarks of good practice for utilities, providers of public transport and road authorities, who are expected to work together cooperatively to facilitate the installation, maintenance and operation of road and non-road infrastructure within road reserves.

The current version of the Code (as made under the *Road Management Act 2004*) was published in October 2008 – refer *Victoria Government Gazette No. S 269 Monday 6 October 2008*.

#### Why has the Code been reviewed?

VicRoads, in consultation with a wide range of stakeholders (eg. road authorities, utilities, providers of public transport, government agencies, works contractors) with considerable experience in operating under the *Road Management Act 2004* (RMA), has reviewed the Code to ensure that it is achieving its purpose and objectives.

The focus of this review was twofold:

- (i) to provide additional and improved guidance to assist road authorities, utilities and providers of public transport better meet their responsibilities to manage their respective infrastructure and conduct works within the road reserve while having regard to the primary purpose of a road to provide for the safe and efficient movement of traffic; and
- (ii) to provide **new guidance** to coordinate the positioning, integrity and safety of non-road infrastructure in road reserves, while also ensuring the amenity and liveability of streets. This new guidance replaces the old *Co-ordination of Streetworks Code of Practice 1995*, which has been made obsolete as a result of the introduction of the RMA in 2004.

#### What is the major change to the Code?

The **most significant change** to the current version of the Code relates to:

- Allocation of standard utility space in road reserves – incorporates a new Appendix 1 into the Code to provide guidance on:
  - coordinating the location and installation of utility services in road reserves, primarily in new ‘greenfield’ urban development areas.
  - applying a set of key principles and a planning process to coordinate the positioning, integrity and safety of non-road infrastructure in road reserves.
  - providing for the planting of street trees to ensure the amenity and liveability of neighbourhoods and streets.
  - conducting early and ongoing consultation between the relevant parties, especially in circumstances where variations to the standard space allocations are required due to site specific features or changes in urban design and sustainability strategies.

- locating utility services in accordance with a number of worked examples that apply to a range of road categories and classifications in 'greenfield' development scenarios.

**Note:** *Established or 'brownfield' areas* - while the worked examples, and the overall guidance provided in Appendix 1 (in particular, the 'objectives' and 'key principles'), can be applied (where applicable and reasonably practicable) to the installation of new, or the replacement of existing, utility infrastructure in established or 'brownfield' areas, the guidance emphasises the need for consultation between affected utility infrastructure managers and road authorities.

### **How is this major change being implemented?**

In addition to the Code providing guidance on the 'allocation of standard utility space in road reserves' (Appendix 1 refers), this guidance is also being adopted by the following key stakeholders:

- Metropolitan Planning Authority (MPA) *Engineering Design and Construction Manual for Subdivision in Growth Areas* (EDCM) – the Code's guidance on the preferred location of utility services in road reserves is included as Addendum 4 on the MPA website to be read in conjunction with the current 2011 version of the EDCM. This guidance (in the form of a type cross section for residential streets) will ultimately be included in an updated version of the EDCM (as Appendix H).
- Melbourne Retail Water Agencies (MRWA) - the MRWA Codes and Standards are consistent with, and include references to, the Code.
- Local Government Infrastructure Design Association's *Infrastructure Design Manual* – guidance is proposed to be incorporated into version 5 of this Manual.

This represents a significant step towards achieving consistency in coordinating the location of utility services in road reserves.

### **What other changes have been made to the Code?**

Other changes to the Code include the following:

- Works affecting public transport – clarifies the requirement in the RMA that road authority and utility works managers pre-notify the relevant public transport operator of any works that are likely to threaten the safety of rail infrastructure or rolling stock or impact on the operation of public transport services.
- Consent for works – provides additional guidance on 'consent for works' requirements to improve consistency of interpretation and application by coordinating road authorities, utilities and providers of public transport.
- Reinstatement – clarifies the RMA requirement that reinstatement of the road must, as nearly as is reasonably practicable, be to an 'equivalent' standard as existed before the works were undertaken – a coordinating road authority cannot require a 'higher' standard of quality or design (ie. upgrading or betterment of existing road infrastructure).

- Works conducted in an emergency – provides further guidance on what constitutes “*works conducted in an emergency*” (for which a consent for works exemption applies); when to give notice to the relevant road authority in the event of an emergency; the timing of any resultant permanent road reinstatement works; and the circumstances when consent may be required for the permanent reinstatement works.
- Obsolete non-road infrastructure – clarifies that infrastructure managers remain responsible for any of their obsolete or redundant non-road infrastructure while it remains in the road reserve.

### **How will the Code changes affect me?**

- **Importantly**, the new Appendix 1 (‘Allocation of Standard Utility Space in Road Reserves’) to the Code is targeted at all stakeholders involved in planning for the provision of future road networks and essential services to support growing population and urban development needs. In particular, the changes focus on the urban design aspects of roads that seek to provide for the safe and efficient movement of all road users; coordinate the positioning, integrity and safety of essential utility services; and support the liveability and character of urban areas (in particular the provision of street trees).
- **More generally**, the changes to the Code will provide improved guidance to all road authorities, utilities and providers of public transport to enable them to work together more cooperatively to manage their respective infrastructure and to conduct works within the road reserve (consistent with their statutory responsibilities under the RMA).

### **Who should use the Code?**

This Code should be used by:

- road authorities (ie. VicRoads, other State road authorities (eg. Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning, Parks Victoria), municipal Councils), utility infrastructure managers and providers of public transport – for the management of their respective infrastructure and the conduct of works within the road reserve; and
- local government, Metropolitan Planning Authority, utilities, providers of public transport, VicRoads, land development industry, and the civil construction and maintenance sector – for planning, locating and installing utility services within road reserves (refer new Appendix 1).

### **How was the Code reviewed?**

The review of the Code, which has been overseen by the Infrastructure Reference Panel (the ‘Panel’ – as established under the RMA), involved the following:

- formation of a Working Group convened by the Panel to address stakeholder identified issues experienced in implementing the guidance as provided in the current version of the Code. The Working Group comprised an independent Chairperson and representatives from local government road authorities, utilities, providers of public transport and VicRoads).
- collaboration with a Steering Group initiated by the Civil Standards Coordination Group (established under the Victorian Civil Construction Industry Alliance) to investigate the incorporation of new guidance in the Code on the allocation of standard space for utility services in road reserves. The Steering Group comprised representatives of local

Government, VicRoads, utility providers, public transport, EnergySafe, the Metropolitan Planning Authority, the land development industry, and the civil construction and maintenance sector.

- release of a Consultation Draft of the revised Code to a wide range of stakeholders in December 2014, with submissions invited.
- endorsement of a final draft of the revised Code by both the Panel and relevant road, utility and public transport Ministers as required under the RMA.

### **Will the Code be reviewed again in the future?**

The Steering Group that oversaw the development of the new guidance on the allocation of standard space for utility services in road reserves (Appendix 1 of the Code), recommended that a thorough review be conducted with all relevant stakeholders after a 12 month period of implementation with the objective of identifying possible improvements to the guidance provided.

### **Where can I find a copy of the Code?**

The Code is available for download from either:

- the VicRoads website ([www.vicroads.vic.gov.au](http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au)) by selecting ‘Acts, regulations & policies’ under the **About VicRoads** section of the website; or
- the Victoria Government Gazette website ([www.gazette.vic.gov.au](http://www.gazette.vic.gov.au)) – refer Special Gazette No. S 117 Thursday 28 April 2016.