



Upgrade of Clay-Based (Formed) Roads to Sheeted Roads Policy

Classification	Policy
Strategic reference	Key Result Area: 3. Our Infrastructure and Assets 4. Our Organisation
Relevant legislation	<i>Local Government Act 1999</i>
Relevant documents	SMDC Strategic Management Plan Road Infrastructure Asset Management Plan Long Term Financial Plan Annual Business Plan and Budget Procurement Policy
Responsible officer	Director Infrastructure Services
Version	1.0
Date adopted	20 May 2026
Date of Effect	21 May 2026
Next review date	May 2030

1. STATEMENT / PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish clear guidelines and principles for the assessment of, and cost apportionment for upgrading clay-based roads to sealed road status.
- Facilitate the application of equitable and reasonable principles when determining whether a clay-based road should be sheeted.
- Provide guidance to Council and officers to manage and evaluate requests to sheet clay-based roads.
- Establish the criteria for determining and prioritising which unmade roads are to be considered for construction on an objective needs basis within the scope of Council budget affordability.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This Policy applies to:

- All public roads under the care and control of Southern Mallee District Council
- Requests received from landowners, residents, community groups, Elected Members, or Council officers
- Roads classified as formed earth / clay based in Council's road asset register

This procedure does not apply to roads under state or federal jurisdiction, or to private roads.

3. DEFINITIONS



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Term	Definition
Clay Based Road	An unformed or formed earth road surface composed primarily of natural soil/clay material, with no aggregate sheeting applied.
Sheeted Road	A road surface that has had a layer of crushed rock, gravel, or aggregate material applied to improve trafficability, drainage, and longevity.
Road Sheetting	The application of approved aggregate material to a road surface to an approved depth and standard.
RAPP	Road Asset Priority Plan - Council document ranking road upgrade priorities across the district
LGA	Local Government Area.
Requesting Party	Any person or body formally requesting a road upgrade under this procedure.
Asset Register	Council's register of all road assets including condition, classification, and maintenance history.
Council	Southern Mallee District Council

4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Council recognises that the upgrade of clay based roads to sheeted roads is a significant capital investment that improves safety, trafficability, and long-term asset performance. Council is committed to:

- Ensuring all upgrade requests are assessed consistently, transparently, and on their merits
- Prioritising upgrades that deliver the greatest benefit to road safety, connectivity, and the community
- Making upgrade decisions that are fiscally responsible and aligned with Council's Long Term Financial Plan
- Communicating clearly with requesting parties at all stages of the assessment process
- Maintaining an accurate and current Road Upgrade Priority Register

Southern Mallee has an extensive proportion of its road network that is clay-based (formed) roads. Council acknowledges that it does not necessarily have the financial resources or receive enough external grants funding to meet all of the infrastructure demands in the district or to meet the community demand for the development of clay-based roads to a sheeted road standard. Therefore, Council's opportunities to fund road upgrades are limited and any decision to proceed with such works should be founded under the guiding principles of this Policy and Council's Strategic Management Plans.

4.2 POLICY PRINCIPLES

Merit Based Assessment

All requests will be assessed on merit using the Priority Scoring Criteria set out in Attachment B. Priority Scoring considers road safety, traffic volume, community access, maintenance burden, environmental impact, cost-benefit, and external contributions.

Equity and Transparency

Council will apply this Policy consistently across the District. All requesting parties will receive written acknowledgement of their request, be informed of the assessment process, and be notified of the outcome with clear reasons.



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Fiscal Responsibility

Road upgrade works represent a material increase in Council's asset base and long-term maintenance obligations. Upgrades will only proceed where funding is available within Council's Capital Works Program, or where a cost-sharing arrangement has been formally approved by Council in accordance with Section 4.5 of the Policy.

Strategic Alignment

All upgrade decisions must align with Council's Strategic Plan, Road Infrastructure Asset Management Plan, Long Term Financial Plan, and Annual Business Plan and Budget. Works will be prioritised within the Road Upgrade Priority Register in accordance with these plans.

Governance and Accountability

Decision-making authority for road upgrades is exercised in accordance with Council's Instrument of Delegation. All decisions at or above the Chief Executive Officer's delegation threshold are resolved by Council. All decisions will be recorded and managed in accordance with Council's Records Management Policy

4.3 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibility
Requesting Party	• Submit a written request using the Road Upgrade Request Form (Attachment A) • Provide all relevant supporting information • Respond to requests for additional information within 20 business days
Infrastructure Team	• Receive and register incoming requests • Conduct technical assessment and site inspection • Prepare preliminary assessment and cost estimate • Assess against Road Hierarchy • Recommend priority ranking in line with RAPP criteria
Director Infrastructure Services	• Prepare assessment report and cost estimate • Recommend priority ranking in line with RAPP criteria • Assess against Road Hierarchy • Endorse reports for Council or delegate consideration (Roads and Infrastructure Committee) • Manage budget implications and capital works scheduling
Chief Executive Officer	• Approve minor upgrades within delegated authority • Present recommendations to Council for works above delegation thresholds
Council (Elected Members)	• Consider and resolve on all road upgrade requests through Roads and Infrastructure Committee • Determine funding allocation through the Annual Budget process • May refer requests for community consultation where appropriate

4.4 PROCESS

Step 1 — Submission of Request

Any person may request an upgrade of a clay-based road to a sheeted road by submitting a completed Road Upgrade Request Form (Attachment A) to Council. Requests may be submitted:

- In person at the Council office
- By email to council@southernmallee.sa.gov.au



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- By post to the Chief Executive Officer, Day Street, Pinnaroo, SA 5304

Requests must include the following minimum information:

- Full name and contact details of the requesting party
- Road name, section/location and length of road requested for upgrade
- Reasons for the request (e.g. safety, access, agricultural use, traffic volumes)
- Any supporting evidence such as photos, usage data, or community support letters

Step 2 — Registration & Acknowledgement

Upon receipt, the Infrastructure team will:

- Acknowledge receipt in writing to the requesting party within 5 business days
- Confirm the road is within Council's jurisdiction and is listed on the asset register
- Advise the requesting party of the assessment process and indicative timeframes

Step 3 — Preliminary Eligibility Check

The Infrastructure team will conduct a preliminary eligibility check to confirm:

- The road is a public road under Council's care and control
- The road is classified as clay based/formed earth in the asset register
- The request is not a duplicate of an existing request or current project
- There are no immediate safety or emergency works required (if so, escalate immediately)

If the road is ineligible (e.g. private road, state road), the requesting party will be notified with reasons, and the request closed.

Step 4 — Technical Assessment

For eligible requests, the Infrastructure team will undertake a technical assessment that may include:

- Site inspection of the road section
- Review of current road condition, drainage and geometry
- Assessment of traffic volumes and road usage patterns
- Review of crash history and safety considerations
- Identification of beneficiaries (residential, agricultural, community access)
- Review of soil type and climate considerations affecting performance of clay surface
- Preliminary cost estimate for sheeting works (materials, preparation, formation, drainage)
- Assessment against scoring criteria (see Attachment B)

Step 5 — Priority Scoring

The Infrastructure Officer will score the request using Priority Scoring Criteria in Attachment B. Scoring criteria include (but are not limited to):

- Road safety risk rating
- Volume and type of traffic (agricultural, residential, emergency access)
- Impact on community connectivity and access
- Current road condition and maintenance burden
- Cost-benefit ratio
- Environmental and drainage impacts
- Level of community support

The scored request will be ranked against other pending upgrade requests on Council's Road Upgrade Priority Register.



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Step 6 — Preparation of Assessment Report

The Director Infrastructure Services will prepare a formal Assessment Report including:

- Summary of the request and background
- Results of the technical assessment and site inspection
- RAPP priority score and ranking
- Cost estimate and preferred treatment options
- Funding considerations and budget availability
- Risk assessment
- Recommendation — approve, defer, or decline

Step 7 — Decision Making

Decision will be made by Council directly, or through the Roads and Infrastructure Committee

Step 8 — Notification of Outcome

The requesting party will be notified in writing of the outcome and will include:

- The decision (approved, deferred, or declined)
- Reasons for the decision
- If approved — indicative timeline for programming of works
- If deferred — the priority ranking and expected review timeframe
- If declined — the reasons and any right of review
- All outcomes will be recorded in Council's system.

Step 9 — Programming of Approved Works

Approved road upgrade works will be:

- Included in Council's Capital Works Program in accordance with budget availability and priority ranking
- Designed and scoped by the Infrastructure team or appointed consultant
- Procured in accordance with Council's Procurement Policy
- Inspected and certified on completion by the Director of Infrastructure Services
- Updated in Council's Road Asset Register

4.5 COST SHARING

In some circumstances, Council may consider cost-sharing arrangements where:

- The primary beneficiary is a single property owner or small group of landowners
- The road serves limited public benefit relative to private benefit
- The works are requested ahead of the priority schedule

Any cost-sharing arrangement must be documented in a formal agreement and approved by Council.

5. DELEGATION

- 5.1 The Chief Executive Officer has the delegation to approve, amend and review any procedures that shall be consistent with this Policy.
- 5.2 The Chief Executive Officer has the delegation to make any formatting, nomenclature, or other minor changes to the Policy during the period of its currency.



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6. AVAILABILITY

- 6.1. This Policy is available free of charge on the Council's Website: www.southernmallee.sa.gov.au
- 6.2 A printed copy of the Policy may be purchased from the Principal Council Office, Day Street, Pinnaroo, upon payment of a prescribed fee in accordance with Council's Schedule of Fees and Charges.

7. FURTHER INFORMATION

This Policy will be reviewed every four (4) years or more frequently if legislation or Council requires.

8. ADOPTION & AMENDMENT HISTORY

The table below sets out the adoption, review and amendment history of the Policy.

Version No:	Issue Date:	Authorised by:	Description of Change:	Minutes Reference:
1	21/05/2026	Council	New Policy	CNL 79/26



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ATTACHMENT A — ROAD UPGRADE REQUEST FORM

SECTION 1 — REQUESTING PARTY DETAILS	
Full Name	
Organisation (if applicable)	
Postal Address	
Phone	Email
Preferred Contact Method	Post / Email / Phone
SECTION 2 — ROAD DETAILS	
Road Name	
From (nearest cross street/landmark)	To (nearest cross street/landmark)
Approximate Length of Section (km)	Road Reserve Number (if known)
Current Surface Type	Clay / Formed Earth / Other: _____
SECTION 3 — REASONS FOR REQUEST	
Please describe the reasons for your request, including any safety concerns, access issues, or other relevant information:	
SECTION 4 — SUPPORTING INFORMATION	
Please indicate any supporting documents attached to this request:	
☐ Photographs of current road condition	
☐ Traffic count data or usage estimates	



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☐ Letters of support from other road users/landowners

☐ Petition or community survey results

☐ Other (please describe):

SECTION 5 — DECLARATION

I declare that the information provided in this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: _____

Date: _____



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ATTACHMENT B — PRIORITY SCORING CRITERIA

#	CRITERION	GUIDANCE	Score (1–5)	Weight
1	Road Safety	Frequency of safety incidents, sight lines, flooding, risk to emergency services access		x3
2	Traffic Volume & Type	Average daily traffic, heavy vehicle usage, agricultural machinery access		x2
3	Access & Connectivity	Number of properties served, alternative route availability, distance to nearest sealed road		x2
4	Current Condition & Maintenance Cost	Annual maintenance spend, frequency of grading, condition rating		x2
5	Community & Economic Benefit	Impact on local agriculture, tourism, community facilities, emergency services, requests received		x1
6	Environmental Factors	Drainage issues, dust nuisance, erosion risk, impact on surrounds		x1
7	Cost-Benefit	Estimated cost vs. assessed benefit; cost per property served; useful asset life		x1
8	External Contribution	Amount to be contributed to Council for the upgrade of the road		x3
WEIGHTED TOTAL SCORE (max 75)				