

15 May 2025

Dear Economy and Infrastructure Committee

Re: Submission to the Inquiry into Wildlife Roadstrike in Victoria

Macedon Ranges Shire Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Inquiry into Wildlife Roadstrike in Victoria. With one of the highest rates of wildlife-vehicle collisions in the state, Council recognises the serious environmental and safety risks posed by wildlife roadstrikes. Council is committed to improving wildlife safety through evidence-based, collaborative, and locally informed strategies.

Please find below our response to the Terms of Reference.

1. Legislative and regulatory frameworks

Council operates within the frameworks set out by the *Road Management Act 2004* and *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*, while navigating the regulatory requirements for speed zoning established by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP). The limitations of current regulations make it challenging for Council to reduce speed limits without DTP approval, even in known wildlife corridors. A review of the application and flexibility of existing guidelines would assist councils in responding more proactively to local wildlife safety concerns.

2. Involvement and resourcing of rescue and rehabilitation organisations

Council collaborates with Wildlife Victoria and supports its Wildlife Road Toll Reduction Project, recognising the significant contribution of volunteers and underfunded organisations who respond to wildlife road trauma. Continued and increased funding support for such organisations is essential.

3. Technologies and infrastructure

Council is exploring data-driven approaches, including GIS mapping and the development of wildlife incident heat maps. These tools will help identify hotspots and inform targeted mitigation strategies. While cost-effective infrastructure (e.g. signage) is already in place, more advanced technologies such as wildlife detection systems and crossings are not currently viable without external funding.

4. Impact on motorists

Wildlife roadstrikes not only lead to animal fatalities but also pose serious risks to motorists, with many incidents resulting in significant vehicle damage and emotional trauma. According to Council's Mobility and Road Safety Strategy, animal strikes account for approximately 5% of vehicle crashes in the Shire. The risk extends beyond motorists – with dead and injured wildlife being a highly distressing sight for the community. Caring for injured and orphaned wildlife increasingly falls to already under-resourced wildlife carers and volunteers, placing significant pressure on the volunteer sector.

Gisborne and Woodend were both listed among the top five wildlife collision hotspots in Victoria in 2023, according to Suncorp Group Insurer AAMI. AAMI also reported that 50% of Australians have hit wildlife while driving, and 61% admitted they would dangerously swerve or brake to avoid doing so – behaviours that create added road safety risks. These figures demonstrate that the issue is not only common but also influences driver behaviour in ways that further endanger road users.

Wildlife Victoria received over 130,000 calls in 2023 alone – with wildlife-vehicle collisions the most common cause of those reports. This call volume is growing by 15% annually, indicating both the scale and increasing trend of wildlife trauma on Victorian roads.

5. Impact of development and infrastructure

The shire's growing population and increasing development pressure contribute to habitat fragmentation, forcing wildlife into closer proximity with roads. Council has integrated wildlife safety into its [Road Mobility and Safety Strategy 2023–2032](#), including a new theme: "Improving Wildlife Safety and Outcomes."

6. International best practices

Council would welcome guidance and support from the Victorian Government in adopting international best practice such as wildlife overpasses, underpasses, and responsive signage, which have been effective elsewhere in reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions.

7. Data collation methods

Council is integrating customer service requests and Wildlife Victoria reporting data into its GIS mapping system to better identify and respond to local collision hotspots. Since 2019, more than 5,000 native animals have been struck by vehicles in the Macedon Ranges Shire through Wildlife Victoria alone. However, this number likely underrepresents the true scale of the issue, as it does not include unreported incidents or data from other sources. Internal analysis suggests the actual number of roadstrikes may be significantly higher.



Macedon Ranges
Shire Council

Macedon Ranges Shire currently accounts for nearly 5% of all wildlife rescue cases in Victoria and has a wildlife road trauma rate 200% higher than the next highest local government area. Between January 2019 and August 2023, vehicle collisions were responsible for 43% of all wildlife trauma in the region. These concerning figures highlight the urgency of improving data-sharing systems and resourcing local councils and wildlife networks to respond effectively.

Council is also seeking to import updated data from Wildlife Victoria at the end of the 2024–25 financial year to enhance mapping accuracy and support future decision-making.

Yours sincerely



Bernie O'Sullivan
Chief Executive Officer