

Submission from Peter Keays, Farmer.

Re: Major Safety Problems created by Central Wire Rope Barriers on the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road, Gheringhap.

Together with my son we are farming grain crops at several properties on the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road, Gheringhap and Hamilton Highway, Stonehaven. For forty years we have lived at the home property on Fyansford-Gheringhap Road where all the farm machinery is stored and then moved along Fyansford-Gheringhap Road etc to the other properties where we grow crops.

The main safety problems caused by the central wire rope barrier are as follows:-

1. The wire rope barrier has been placed across most of the farm paddock gates on the north west section of Fyansford-Gheringhap Road, limiting access for everyone's farm machinery. Rural Roads Victoria told us we could do a "U" turn through the nearest gap to get to the other side of the road. This is not possible with a semi trailer grain truck, 14 metres long, or tractor, seed drill, roller combination, 16 metres long and 5 metres wide. We will be required to travel seven km. one way and 12km the other way to do the equivalent of a "U" turn. With farm machinery in tow, the top speed is 18 kmh. Previously we could enter the road and head the way we wanted too, much more safely and with far less disruption to other traffic. So this will cause much greater traffic disruption.

One of our farm paddock gates is the original entrance to our land and has been there in some form for over one hundred years. The other farm paddock gate was there some form 40 years ago when we bought the property but Rural Roads Victoria will not recognise this. A neighbour has a Powercor emergency entrance to access power pylons which is not to be obstructed by law, but the central wire rope barrier limits access from only one direction. In the event of fire anywhere along this road 4 wheel drive Fire Trucks now only have limited access and great difficulty doing "U" turns in gaps. None of these facts was considered by Rural Roads Victoria.

2. Each lane of the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road is now very narrow and five metre wide farm machinery does not fit easily between the wire rope barrier and the white posts, the average gap is 5.1metres. and there are no passing lanes.

Recently three vehicles passed my tractor travelling at 18 kmh, in a 90 metre farm entrance gap in the wire rope barrier. This was a very dangerous situation with the last vehicle hitting a red cone at the start of the wire rope barrier and just missing the front wheel of the tractor. Due to the narrowness of the lanes, if we have to stop on this 100kmh road to wait to turn into our car entrance it creates a dangerous situation for all involved, as there are no turning lanes in either direction. If someone breaks down or has a problem there is really nowhere to go and the road is blocked. There are steep drop offs from the gravel edge on the sides of the road in places, some up to 400mm. so it is unsafe to pull off too far.

3. When we exit our property from our car exit and turn south we are now unable to see oncoming traffic from the north due to the wire rope barrier, support structure and the lay of the land. So we have to pull out and hope for the best that if someone is coming at 100kmh that they will be able to slow in time. A very dangerous situation.

When I enter our property with our caravan in tow, combined length 13 meters, I used to swing wide to use the entrance but now this is not possible due to the central wire rope barrier so this manoeuvre will be very difficult and far more dangerous.

4. Early in the process we had what Rural Roads Victoria would call a consultation process, because my son was captain of the local fire brigade and we were farmers using the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road. But in reality it was just a session to tell us what we were getting, any of our requests and information was not listened too. I gave Rural Roads Victoria plans of where our farm paddock gates were located and the sizes of machinery that we and other farmers using the road, operate. This information was obviously ignored.

All in all the Fyansford-Gheringhap Road has become quite a dangerous road due to the installation of central wire rope barriers.