Road Safety Audit Report

Location: **Wanganui Road / Ford Road, Shepparton**

Project: **Road and Intersection Upgrade**

Stage: **Functional Design**

Client: **GTA Consultants**

Report Issue Date: 27/11/2017
**Road Safety Audit Report**
Wanganui Road / Ford Road, Shepparton
GTA Consultants

RSA Reference: RSA-06495

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**Document Record**

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<th>Senior Auditors</th>
<th>Technical Consultants</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>27/11/2017</td>
<td>Peter Harris, Bob Cumming</td>
<td>Theo Niakolas</td>
<td>Peter Harris</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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INTRODUCTION

This is a road safety audit of a proposed road upgrade of Wanganui and Ford Road, Shepparton, between Golf Drive and Grahamvale Road, undertaken by Road Safety Audits P/L, commissioned by GTA Consultants. It has been carried out in accordance with “Austroads Guide to Road Safety, Part 6: Road Safety Audit 2009” guidelines.

ROAD SAFETY AUDIT: OVERVIEW

A road safety audit is an independent examination of a design or condition to evaluate potential safety issues for all road user types. It is typically done by a team of suitably qualified people and often provides suggestions for consideration by the designer / client / project team.

A road safety audit is fundamentally a subjective qualitative process highly influenced by the experience and views of the individual team members. RSA P/L’s quality assurance process utilises customised checklists designed for niche areas in traffic engineering/road design, in conjunction with a four-layer audit process: 1. on-site evaluation; 2. media and data capture and review; 3. specialist auditor input; and 4. secondary blinded reviews. In this case specialist auditor input was provided by Theo Niakolas, a road design engineer specialising in high speed roads and truck stability.

The purpose of a road safety audit is to raise potential safety issues, not to check compliance with guidelines and standards. However, at times this is done if the guideline or standard has a strong basis in safety and is highly relevant to the context of the issue being examined.

ROAD SAFETY AUDIT TEAM

The road safety audit was carried out by Peter Harris and Bob Cumming. Peter Harris and Bob Cumming both carry out road safety audits full-time in various states of Australia and have extensive experience in all stages of road safety audits leading or participating in several hundred audits and risk assessments every year.

Road Safety Audits Pty Ltd is accredited for the conduct of road safety audits under VicRoads’ professional services register. Peter Harris and Bob Cumming are accredited Senior Road Safety Auditors under VicRoads pre-qualified senior road safety audit scheme.

CONDUCT OF THE SITE INSPECTION

A site visit was carried out during the day and night on 19 November 2017 in normal traffic conditions and clear and hot weather conditions. The site was driven many times, with walking around the key intersections and key points of interest.
**PROJECT**

The existing road has one lane in each direction and basic intersections, with an 80km/h speed limit west of Goulburn Valley Highway and 60km/h east of it. The land use is a mix of industrial, residential, commercial, and community services.

The project seeks to maintain one lane in each direction and the existing speed limits and add:

- A roundabout at GVH
- Traffic signals at Verney Road
- A roundabout at Grahamvale Road
- A constructed median west of GVH and a painted median east of it
- A shared path running along the northern side of the road, and a footpath to the south

**DOCUMENTATION PROVIDED FOR AUDIT**

The following documents were provided by the client to facilitate the audit:

- GTA Consultants Concept Functional Alignment Plans Set: 117720-02 1 to 17 inclusive, all issue P5
- GVH intersection Functional Layout Plan issue P1 sheet 1 and 2
- Safe System Solutions Safe System Assessment Issue 2
RISK RATINGS

RSA P/L does not typically use the Austroads risk rating method, mostly because it can only be applied to some points and therefore can skew the perceived risk of other points, and also due to it being a highly subjective approach, giving the false impression of objectivity.

- **‘Urgent’ / ‘High-Risk’**: Needs immediate attention / changes as per RSA suggestion or similar.
- **‘Recommend’ / ‘Serious’ / ‘Important’**: Must be robustly reviewed. Most likely requires a change to avoid a high-risk road environment for one or more user groups.
- **‘Should’ / ‘Suggest’ / ‘Significant’**: Based on the view of the RSA team the suggestion should be done, but it concedes that there could be reasons why inaction or alternative action is equally correct. Must be robustly reviewed by contractor and where relevant key traffic engineering project stakeholders.
- **‘Review’ / ‘Consider’**: RSA is raising an observation but has no strong opinion on the outcome and need for changes. Project should review because it’s not an immediate and high risk and may not be immediately obvious to RSA the reasons for the practice / setup / behaviour. May need monitoring.
- **‘Minor’**: Typically, a low road-safety consequence / compliance issues (to guidelines or plans) / administrative controls. Unlikely to increase risk of crash.
- **‘Note’**: Little or no road safety significance. Typically added to give a complete picture of the design, site, context, analysis, auditors understanding.

SCOPE

Senior auditors at RSA P/L typically apply a high experience base and attempt to focus on ‘big-picture’ safety issues. These are issues that fundamentally affect road safety based on road user behaviour and expectations, not merely checking compliance to road design guidelines. “A Road Safety Audit is not a check of compliance to standards. Rather than checking for compliance, a road safety audit is checking fitness for purpose: will the road or treatment work safely for its expected road users?” (AGRS RSA 2009)

A functional design stage road safety audit tends to examine the broad design for more fundamental issues that can’t be changed later by minor signs or linemarking changes. This includes intersection layouts and types, horizontal and vertical alignments, access points, and all road user groups.

The scope is generally limited to the safety effects of the proposed changes, and does not look beyond the limits of works to try to improve substandard conditions outside of the general scope of the works.

The scope does not include reviewing the Safe System Assessment and relating this road safety audit to that assessment. It assesses the design on its merits only.
AUDIT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

KEY ISSUES (SIGNIFICANT SAFETY COMPONENT)

1. Geometric design of Grahamvale Road roundabout

   Based on the concept plan, it appears that the proposed roundabout arrangement will not meet Austroads design criteria.

   Given the speed environment, it is suggested that the approach leg geometry be appropriately designed to accommodate the operating speed (realistic speed-shedding at intervals through the curves), superelevation, vehicle stability, and sight distances.

2. Continuing turn lanes

   It is appreciated that auxiliary turn lanes generally reduce crash potential. However, the audit team is unconvinced that an un-channelised continuing lane is the right option through this industrial section.

   Although it’s legally a turn lane, drivers will find it ambiguous as to where to enter and how long to travel in it. It is suspected that it might end up functioning as a second through lane, without the safety benefits of sheltered auxiliary lanes and with a level of confusion and ambiguity that might lead to safety problems.

   An alternative could be to formalise the predicted driver behaviour by changing the design to two through lanes. However, this would lose the benefit of the auxiliary turn facility.

   Therefore, taking into consideration the low speed limit through this section, it is strongly suggested that this aspect of the design be carefully reviewed with the option of channelised median formations carefully considered (in red below). This option seeks to gain the benefit of channelised auxiliary lanes without the operational ambiguity of the continuing turn lane.

   ![Diagram of roundabout and auxiliary lanes]

   IMPORTANT
3. Shared path users (SPU)

The proposed landscaping gives rise to the significant risk of sight distance interference. For example, left turners (yellow) need sufficient distance to see oncoming SPU, particularly those travelling in the same direction. Right turners who are focussed on picking a gap in traffic (blue) need the ability to see oncoming SPU from both directions.

Furthermore, the proposed minor intersection layouts give the appearance of priority of vehicles over SPU.

For cyclists, the actual priority under the road rules is based on whether it’s a side road or a driveway. However, this distinction is largely lost on road/path users, and from a safety perspective, it gives rise to ambiguity and erodes pathway continuity.

Continued next page
A.

It is strongly suggested that the sight distance issue be designed-out by having no landscaping within a set distance of intersections (approximately 20m).

Note: The option of relying on low planting is considered to be inferior because, even if done correctly initially, in time plants might be replaced without full knowledge of the strategic issue. Also, the option of having no growth height restriction and relying on maintenance is strongly discouraged.

B.

Review the strategic approach to managing right of way priority with a consistent approach that will be understood by all road users. Minimise the need for signage.

One option that could achieve this, and, slow turning traffic, is to have the accessways and shared path at-grade (green line), the shared path contrasting in colour, then ramping down to road level (red), with routine shared path pavement markings.

Example: View from a driveway looking towards a road.

**IMPORTANT**
4. **Wanganui Road / Golf Drive medium to long term arrangement**

Wanganui Road may not be extended beyond Golf Drive for years. The left-in / right-out movements might operate without issue if the ‘ultimate’ road is built as per the plans (image below-left). However, the ultimate road configuration will most likely give some drivers misleading visual cues and driving options. Also, drivers will get into the habit of not giving way, which could lead to manoeuvring conflicts from u-turns. Consideration should be given to other options such as utilising the existing road to separate the movements as per mock-up below-right.

This treatment would also mitigate the risk posed by an errant vehicle striking the junction pole (e.g. as a result of confused and speeding driver).
5. **Wanganui Road Utility Poles**

   It appears that some light poles will be further from traffic such as those on the south side at the west end (below-left).

   However, others on the north side of the road (e.g. at the west end east of Kittles Road) are currently located where the ultimate median will be (below-right). The offset of these poles ‘within the median’ might be similar to the existing offset, but only for through traffic, not turning traffic.

   This aspect of the design (change in risk profile / treatment of hazards) will need to be carefully assessed as the project progresses.

6. **Street lighting**

   Currently there is no street lighting.

   With a road upgrade of this type and the likely future lane development, the basic safety and amenity of the shared path and footpath is considered to be congruent to the provision of street lighting. This is especially important due to the number of and type of abutting access points, and, to encourage commuter path usage.

   This consideration is not limited to specific areas such as the looping around the heritage listed building at Wanganui Homestead, or major intersections, but to the whole road length.

**IMPORTANT**
7. **Kerb type**

The typical cross sections are highly schematic only but indicatively show barrier kerb. It’s important that barrier kerb is not used on the high-speed section of road.

**IMPORTANT**

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8. **Existing pavement cross section**

The existing road cross section appears to be 3%/3% or flatter.

If this existing pavement is retained to form the westbound carriageway, drivers will be crossing the crown to enter turn lanes. Nevertheless, the ‘change in crossfall’ tolerances should be within guidelines for a 90km/h design speed but will need to be reviewed if the pavement is retained.

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9. **Cyclists at the GVH roundabout**

On-road bicycle lanes are shown at this roundabout.

On-road bicycle lanes within roundabouts are no longer supported by Austroads or VicRoads design supplements. This is due to the offset of cyclists to the vision of entering drivers.

**IMPORTANT**
10. Cyclists at the GVH roundabout (notwithstanding point 9)

Provision for both on-road and off-road cyclist movements are proposed. However, some cyclists who are generally comfortable riding on the road will still find a large roundabout with high truck volumes intimidating and would prefer the option of exiting the road.

To cater to these cyclists, strong consideration should be given to providing ramp links on both approaches similar to the example shown below-right.

Note: It is the view of the audit team that the shared path crossing access does not serve this purpose.

11. Cyclists at the GVH roundabout

Negligible storage space is provided between the continuing shared path and the crossings area. Thus, cyclists waiting to cross are likely to obstruct continuing cyclists.

Consider adjusting the design to provide storage space.
12. Cyclists at the Verney Road intersection

The shared path appears to constrict to a typical footpath through the intersection.

It would be expected that cyclist continuity would be a desirable outcome through the intersection.

**Review** the design options including bicycle lanterns and a path wide enough for two cyclists to safely pass.
13. Cyclists at the Ford Road / Grahamvale Road intersection

The shape of the shared path indicated below is not conducive to bicycle riding and would make it difficult for cyclists and pedestrians to use the path together.

It is suggested that it be redesigned in a more curved formation.
14. Footpath position

On Ford Road, there are several driveways that have vegetation hard up against the property boundary line.

The design shows the footpath hard up against the property boundary line. This might result in an unnecessary reduction in visibility between pedestrians (and young cyclists likely to be using the footpath), and drivers exiting driveways.

Consider localised adjustments to the footpath position.
15. Speed limit signs

Sheet 10 indicates that the 60km/h speed signs on Goulburn Valley Highway are to be relocated approximately 430m north.

At present, there are 80km/h signs attached to the rear of these signs facing northbound traffic. It is assumed that the intent is to relocate the 80km/h signs as well, so that the speed limit change is at the same locations for both carriageways.

It’s not essential to do this, particularly since the carriageway is divided. However, it would be a good measure so that northbound drivers don’t view the 80km/h signs and speed up too soon. It is suggested that this be done.
16. Bus stop

There’s an existing bus stop at the TAFE at the west end just west of Rudd Road.

If this is to be retained in its current position, drivers will probably overtake in the right turn lane. This is undesirable and confusion may arise with other motorists turning within the intersection.

It is suggested that this be reviewed with consideration to bus-bay indentation / other.
17. Abutting surfaces

At driveways and other local accesses, it would be undesirable for unsealed surfaces to result in the migration of stones and debris onto the shared path. It is suggested that they be sealed for some distance.
18. Number of intersections abutting shared path

A property on sheet 8 currently has one crossover but the plans indicate that a second will be provided.

It’s desirable to minimise the number of access points to minimise potential conflict with shared path users.

In the example above, the resident can easily turn around within their property.
19. Vehicle manoeuvring

It's unclear whether the design accommodates u-turns in the 2.8km section east from Golf Drive as indicated below.

If it does not, it could result in awkward manoeuvring such as 3-point turns with reversing into the deceleration lane.

It is suggested that this be thoroughly reviewed.

20. Access at Deca Driving School

The driving school (sheet 6) appears to specialise in truck driving training.

The plans indicate that the need for a deceleration lane is under review.

Further to that review and to point 19 above, it's unclear whether the training is fully on-site or whether drivers under instruction / training exit the site and drive on public roads. If the latter, it's unclear how they would exit the site and travel east. Review.
21. **Splitter island at Kakadu Drive and Sheet 13 ‘Access Road’**

The island is within the continuing alignment of the shared path which is not ideal for path continuity.

Review options such as terminating the island further away from the road or extending it towards the road but providing a refuge.

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22. **SUP alignment near Wanganui Homestead**

The shared path alignment winds through the heritage site adjacent to the access road, but remains adjacent to Wanganui Rd across the access road. A sequence of tight turns is difficult to ride along and could mislead drivers into thinking cyclists are not crossing the access road.

**Consider** changing the path alignment across the access road to more like a typical ‘bent out’ crossing treatment.
OTHER ISSUES (NEGIGIBLE SAFETY COMPONENT)

23. Existing signs

A significant proportion of the existing warning (and other) signage will become redundant under this project. This includes existing ‘shared path’ signage at Matilda Drive.

South side of Ford Road at Matilda Drive

24. Drafting

It’s understood that an on-road bicycle lane is not proposed. However, the plans appear to indicate an on-road bicycle path. It is suggested that this be clarified as it has the potential to raise road safety audit / other issues.

25. Drafting

The scale on the main plan set is shown as 1:2000. However, the actual scale at A3 is 1:1000.
## SUMMARY / RESPONSE TABLE

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<tr>
<th>Point No.</th>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>GTA Consultants Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Geometric design of Grahamvale Road roundabout.</td>
<td>May require significant adjustment to accommodate realistic and safe speed-shedding.</td>
<td>Accept. The layout proposed is conceptual only and subject to further detailed design development. The general layout as shown has been prepared loosely based on applicable standards and requirements in order to better understand potential land acquisition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Continuing turn lanes could be problematic.</td>
<td>Channelised auxiliary lanes are preferred.</td>
<td>Accept. The arrangement will be reviewed during further design development. The audit findings are considered relevant and channelised turn lanes, configured in the manner proposed in the audit, will be given consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Sight distance to shared path users.</td>
<td>Omit vegetation on separators for ~20m.</td>
<td>Accept. Landscape design to taken on this recommendation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Wanganui Road / Golf Drive medium to long term arrangement.</td>
<td>Separate movements.</td>
<td>Accept. The interim and ultimate layout has not been due consideration. Further consideration will be taken during design development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Wanganui Road Utility poles.</td>
<td>Review.</td>
<td>Accept. The concept layout did not take account of lighting upgrades. Further design development will address this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Street lighting.</td>
<td>Provide lighting along shared path.</td>
<td>Accept. The concept layout did not take account of lighting upgrades. Further design development will address this.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Kerb type.</td>
<td>Review.</td>
<td>Accept. Kerb selection and application will be per VicRoads’ road design guidelines and other applicable standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Existing pavement cross section.</td>
<td>Review.</td>
<td>Accept. This will be reviewed during detailed design.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point No.</td>
<td>Issue</td>
<td>Comment</td>
<td>GTA Consultants Response</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Cyclists at the GVH roundabout.</td>
<td>Not compliant with VicRoads design guidelines.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cycle provisions will be reviewed during detailed design. The layouts developed are conceptual and based on determining footprint required with regard for design principles and traffic capacity assessment. The treatment eventually documented in detailed design will be based on current practice and applicable design standards.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Cyclists at the GVH roundabout.</td>
<td>Provide ramp.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Cyclist storage at the GVH roundabout</td>
<td>Provide space.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Cyclists at the Verney Road intersection.</td>
<td>Review provision for cyclists.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Cyclists at the Ford Road / Grahamvale Road Intersection.</td>
<td>Review shape of path.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Footpath position.</td>
<td>Localised offset adjustments.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Speed limit signs.</td>
<td>Relocate.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Bus stop at the TAFE</td>
<td>Review possible indentation.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Abutting surfaces.</td>
<td>Seal.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Number of Intersections Abutting Shared Path.</td>
<td>Minimise.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and amended as required in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>U-turn provision.</td>
<td>Review.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and amended as required in further design development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Deca Driving School access to travel east.</td>
<td>Review.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and amended as required in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Splitter Island at Kakadu Drive and Sheet 13 ‘Access Road’.</td>
<td>Review.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and amended as required in further design development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Point No.</td>
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<td>Comment</td>
<td>GTA Consultants Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>SUP alignment near Wanganui Homestead.</td>
<td>Change the crossing position.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Other Issues</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Existing signs</td>
<td>Many signs will be redundant.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and incorporated in further design development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Drafting: Bicycle lane</td>
<td>Clarify.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>This will be reviewed and amended as required in further design development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Drafting: Scale</td>
<td>Review.</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Noted and will be amended as required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The audit has attempted to balance the safety needs of all road users within the site/design constraints. As per Austroads guidelines, the suggestions provided have attempted to be realistic/feasible and commensurate with the actual risk posed. Although it attempts to raise all potential safety risks, this is generally not practicable due to a limited knowledge of the site and the design. Agreement to the issues and/or suggestions does not necessarily eliminate risk.

A road safety audit is fundamentally a subjective qualitative process highly influenced by the experience and views of the individual team members. It is expected that the project team has competence to incorporate any audit findings into the broader design-risk decision process and to ask the audit team further questions where necessary.

Bob Cumming  
27/11/2017  
Senior Road Safety Auditor  
BE (Civil)

Peter Harris  
27/11/2017  
Senior Road Safety Auditor  
CPEng, RPEQ, NER, BE (Civil), BB (Bus. Admin)
RESPONDING TO THE ROAD SAFETY AUDIT

Although the client receiving the report does not have to agree to the audit findings/suggestions, the issues and associated risks should be carefully considered. A written response should be made to all of the audit findings raised, then signed off by the responsible person from the project team.

RSA P/L does not change the audit findings or sign off on the project’s responses. However, if a finalisation meeting has not been commissioned by the client, the client is encouraged to provide the responses to RSA P/L to check that each audit point has been fully understood. Also, the responses can be used by RSA P/L for their knowledge and possible use on future audits for this project.

REFERENCES

Relevant guidelines, standards, laws, and policy documents

Road Safety Audit

Traffic Engineering
- Austroads Guide to Road Design (AGRD)
- Austroads Guide to Traffic Management (AGTM)
- AS 1742 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices, including:
  - Part 1 General Introduction and Index of Signs
  - Part 2 Traffic Control Devices for General Use
- VicRoads Supplement to Austroads Guides and AS1742