

CONDITION OF COUNCIL'S ROADS

Road Hierarchy Priority

Due to the geographic spread of the local government area, Cessnock City Council has more kilometres of roads per capita than other Hunter Councils. Council is responsible for maintaining approximately 1,000km of road pavement. Of this, around 100km are regional roads that provide connectivity between larger villages and towns both within and outside the Local Government Area (e.g. Wollombi Rd and Lovedale Rd). The remaining 900km are local roads, of which approximately 330km are unsealed gravel roads, while the remaining 670km are generally sprayed bitumen seal with smaller lengths of asphalt or concrete pavement. Of the local road network, approximately 170km are classified as local collector roads that provide the primary connectivity within larger villages and towns (e.g. Quarrybylong St Aberdare, Sandy Creek Rd Quorrobolong).

Measuring Road Condition

As part of the development of Council's Asset Management System, Council has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of its road network. The condition of Council's roads is measured as a Pavement Condition Index (PCI). This is a technical measure of the constructed road pavement that is available for traffic use. The PCI does not account for roads that have a less than desirable width, have 'edge break' or limited table drainage, have unsealed shoulders, have no kerb and gutter, have no piped storm water drainage or have no paved footpaths. The PCI does not include a measure of any unsealed (gravel) road.

While the average PCI of Council's overall road network is assessed as very good; further analysis has indicated that the subset of regional and local

collector roads within the road network are in much worse condition. These roads are the most utilised by the community and hence influence their opinion about Council's road network.

Funds from the special rate variation will focus on minimising the number of regional and local collector roads in poor condition (low PCI) by extending their useful life through regular resealing and rehabilitation programs. These activities will improve the overall condition of these priority roads and, in turn, improve the overall road network.

Benchmarking Success

Council's current special rate variation has been utilised to undertake additional renewal treatments (resealing and rehabilitation) within the regional and local collector road sub-networks – this is over and above the historic whole-of-network annual road renewal program that continues in parallel.

The table below compares the condition of the road network prior to the previous special rate variation (based on a whole-of-network condition assessment conducted in 2009/10) against the interim condition as it stands today. The interim figures are indicative only as an updated whole-of-network condition assessment is not due to be undertaken until later this financial year. In spite of this, the figures show a trend towards an improvement in the overall condition of the network, most importantly a reduction in the percentage of very poor or failed roads. This trend is clearer still in the Regional Road sub-network, clearly demonstrating the value and impact of the special rate variation.

PCI	Condition	% Total Sealed Road Network 2009/10	% Total Sealed Road Network 2012/13 (Interim)	% Regional Road Network 2009/10	% Regional Road Network 2012/13 (Interim)
8.5 to 10	Excellent	54.03%	11.23%	39.13%	7.65%
7 to 8.5	Very Good	24.63%	20.95%	23.67%	16.82%
5.5 to 7	Good	9.45%	54.32%	9.15%	47.49%
4 to 5.5	Fair	4.03%	12.86%	3.21%	26.83%
2.5 to 4	Poor	2.10%	0.64%	1.50%	1.21%
1 to 2.5	Very Poor	1.88%	0.00%	6.49%	0.00%
< 1.0	Failed	3.88%	0.00%	16.85%	0.00%