



## Council a step closer to honouring its pledge to seal Packer Road

### Description

Back in 2018, Council applied for (and got) a [“Special Rate Variation”](#) that put everyone’s Rates up by a third.

I voted against that rate rise, [as I have voted against every tax hike proposed by Council since I was elected in 2016](#). However, I did agree that a list of proposed capital works – improvements to local roads among them, was absolutely necessary so that the ratepayers could see where this extra money was going.

Among the proposed projects that would be funded was the sealing of Packer Road, a key east-west road linking the Putty Road travelling north from Wilberforce, and the river communities of Lower Portland, Cumberland Reach and Sackville.

Locals have long anticipated the sealing of this road, citing its heavy use, status as a flood evacuation route, and parlous condition, which has sadly included injuries and fatalities over the years.

Planning work commenced, including a budget variation of \$100,000 in the December quarter of 2020 to scope and plan works. The road was listed in Council’s [capital works budget](#) for 2020-2021 with a cost of \$2,226,000.

PROJECT	PROJECT DESCRIPTION	DRAFT BUDGET 2020/2021
<b>New, Renewal and Upgrade of Road Network</b>		<b>15,190,638</b>
	Scheyville Road, Maraylya – Road Rehabilitation	427,000
	George Street, Windsor – Road Rehabilitation	100,000
	Douglas Street, North Richmond – Seal Gravel Road	530,000
	Packer Road, Blaxland Ridge – Seal Gravel Road	2,226,000

COVID hit, along with fires and floods between 2020 and 2022, and Council's plans were greatly affected.

[I took explicit support for the sealing of Packer Road to the December 2021 Local Government Elections:](#)

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Fast forward to early 2024, and users of Packer Road were entitled to know where this was up to. Finally, the matter came back to Council on February 13th and everyone was hugely concerned to find that Council staff were now recommending that the project be dropped, due to a significant increase in the cost of the project from \$2.2M to over \$4.7M (source: [Item 4.5.3, Feb 2024 business paper](#))

#### RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive and note the Quarter 2 - 2023/2024 Capital Projects Report,
2. Note the tender evaluation for T00163 Packer Road Sealing, Blaxlands Ridge as outlined in Confidential Attachment 1 to this report,
3. **Does not enter into a contract for the delivery of the Packer Road Sealing, and**
4. Identifies feasible road safety treatment alternatives for Packer Road, Blaxlands Ridge, through the 2024/2025 Capital Works Program

This brought a spirited response from the local community, with many of them writing, calling and attending the Council meeting.

I am very pleased that Council on this occasion rejected the advice of staff and formalised our commitment to sealing Packer Road, despite the increased cost. I believe it is important for Council to honour its promises. Sadly, with limited resources, other worthy road projects will now be deferred, which I successfully amended be the subject of a workshop with Councillors and staff.

Here is a sampling of the debate before the Council chamber as we discussed this:

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#### Category

1. Uncategorized

#### Tags

1. Packer Road
2. Cumberland Reach
3. Hawkesbury Roads
4. Hawkesbury City Council
5. Sackville
6. Lower Portland

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