

## **7.7 Contract 2021/202, Walmer Street Bridge Northern Approach Spans Replacement**

### **Executive Summary**

#### Purpose

The purpose of this report is for Council to consider the awarding of Contract No. 2021/202, Walmer Street bridge northern approach spans replacement.

#### Background

The Walmer Street Bridge comprises three components: the land bridge in the City of Boroondara, the river bridge across the Yarra River and the land bridge in the City of Yarra.

The Walmer Street Bridge provides a strategic cycling link into the Melbourne central business district and provides a vital link to the community in Kew, Richmond and Abbotsford. As with many bridges, the Walmer Street bridge provides a key connection across the Yarra River. For the Kew residents that live in the vicinity of Walmer Street, the bridge provides walking and cycling access to Victoria Gardens Shopping Centre, the strip shopping on Victoria Street, Richmond, and access to public transport with Tram 109 along Victoria Street. As a cycling route, the Walmer Street Bridge is identified on the Principal Bicycle Network (PBN), as a Bicycle Priority Route (BPR) and forms part of a Strategic Cycling Corridor (SCC).

Pedestrian and cyclist numbers have doubled over the last seven years and the intense development of the Victoria Street East precinct, which is only partly complete, will add several thousand new residents to the immediate vicinity of the bridge, who will use the bridge to access the parklands in Boroondara.

In August 2018, the Victorian Government announced \$200,000 funding for a business case to upgrade the full length of the Walmer Street Bridge including the river bridge and the two land bridges on either side of the river. The full business case for a new wider and fit for purpose bridge over the river was finalised and submitted for funding consideration as part of the 2020-2021 Victorian Government's State Budget. Council, along with the City of Yarra and the Walmer Street Bridge Working Group has been in regular communication with the Department of Transport to assist in finalising the full business case.

While the full business case was under development, in April 2019 the Federal Government announced \$1.5 million grant funding to upgrade the northern land bridge section of the Walmer Street Bridge.

In January 2020, Heritage Victoria made a recommendation to include the Walmer Street Bridge in the Victorian Heritage Register. The Heritage Council held a hearing on 30 September 2020 with the City of Boroondara and the City of Yarra lodging submissions and presenting. A determination by the Heritage Council was made on 16 December 2020 and Council was notified on 21 December 2020.

The Heritage Council determined, 'pursuant to section 49(1)(a) of the Heritage Act 2017, that the Walmer Street Bridge, located at Walmer Street, Kew, City of Boroondara and Walmer Street, Richmond, City of Yarra is of State-level cultural heritage significance and is to be included in the Victorian Heritage Register'.

Given the Heritage Council determination, further assessments were undertaken to determine the best course of action to proceed with this project. In line with our discussions with the Heritage Council, the original design was modified and submitted to them for a permit. A conditional permit from Heritage Victoria was received on 21 December 2021. These conditions can be met prior to the commencement of the works without compromising the design.

It is intended to replace the existing failing northern land bridge and the shared user path approach to the Bridge. The new structure will provide a 2.4m wide path between the handrails for the first 20 metres from the existing river bridge in line with the Heritage Victoria's requirements and the path will be widened to 3.3m for the rest of the structure.

### Key Issues

The key issues are outlined below:

- The Bridge is strategically important and is defined on the Principal Bicycle Network, as a Bicycle Priority Route and a Strategic Cycling Corridor
- The bridge experiences high pedestrian and cyclist use, and safety is a key issue on the bridge
- The northern land bridge fails to meet current standards. It is not disability compliant, it is excessively steep and narrow with a clear width of only 1.73m.
- The northern bridge structure is in poor condition, with sections failing and currently propped up by scaffolding
- There is strong community interest and support for the proposed bridge replacement
- The modified design satisfies the Heritage Council's requirements and all other approvals from relevant authorities are in place

### Next Steps

The Contract is comprised of a lump sum base Project cost, inclusive of the first twelve months maintenance under Defects and Liability. The estimated cost over the life of the Contract term is \$3,284,532.89 (including GST). The estimated cost to Council after return of GST Input Credits is \$2,985,938.99.

Confidential information is contained in **Attachment 1**, as circulated in the confidential section of the agenda attachments, in accordance with Section 66(2)(a) and the definitions of 'confidential information' in section 3(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020*. The information relates to Council business information, being information that would prejudice the Council's position in commercial negotiations if prematurely released.

The item has been included in the public agenda to facilitate transparency and accountability in Council's decision making.

If discussion of the confidential information in the attachments to this report is required in order for Council to make a decision, this item will be deferred to the confidential section of the agenda.

## Officers' recommendation

That Council resolve:

1. To award Contract No. 2021/202, Walmer Street bridge northern approach spans replacement to:
  - Infracon Group Pty Ltd ACN 100668344)for a total cost of \$3,284,532.89 (including GST). The cost to Council after the return of the GST Tax Input Credits (\$298,593.90) is \$2,985,938.99.
2. Approve the allocation of a separate contingency, as set out in the attached confidential Appendix 1, and delegate authority to the Contract Superintendent to expend this contingency to ensure successful completion of the project.
3. To authorise the Director Places and Spaces to execute the contract agreements with the above contractors.
4. To note that expenditure under this contract in 2021-2022 is in accordance with Council's adopted budget and expenditure in future years will be in accordance with the approved budget allocations.

---

**Responsible director: Daniel Freer, Director Places and Spaces**

---

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this report is for Council to give consideration to the awarding of Contract No. 2021/202, Walmer Street bridge northern approach spans replacement.

## **2. Policy implications and relevance to community plan and council plan**

This procurement process has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Council's Contracts and Tendering Probity Policy and Council's Procurement Policy.

The proposed works for Walmer Street bridge northern approach spans replacement align with the following themes and strategies in the Boroondara Community Plan (2021-2031):

Theme 5: Moving Around

Strategy 5.3 Shared paths and footpaths are fit-for-purpose through continued improvemetns to surface condition and lighting.

Strategy 5.4 Off-road bike paths and on-road cycling lanes are interconnected and safe through expanding access and infrastructure for cyclists.

Strategy 5.5 Sustainable transport use is encouraged and supported through delivery of green travel programs and advocacy to State and Federal Governments.

## **3. Background**

Tenders have been sought from suitably qualified organisations to undertake proposed Walmer Street bridge northern approach spans replacement in accordance with the requirements of the specification.

The key objective of this project is to replace the existing failing northern land bridge with a new wider, disability compliant and fit for purpose bridge to cater for the communities on either side of the Yarra River.

The project will be fully managed by Council.

### **Invitation to tender**

In accordance with Council's procurement procedures and Section 186 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Council invited public tenders from suitably qualified organisations to undertake proposed Walmer Street bridge northern approach spans replacement. An Invitation to tender was advertised in the local government tenders section of "The Age" newspaper on Saturday 11 December 2021 and on Council's website. The closing date for submissions was 4pm, Tuesday 8 February 2022.

In response to the advertisement, Council received two submissions:

- ACE Infrastructure Pty Ltd; and
- Infracon Group Pty Ltd.

#### **4. Outline of key issues/options**

##### **4.1 Usage**

Pedestrian and cyclist use continues to increase with data collected in March 2017 demonstrating high use of the bridge, both on weekends and weekdays, by pedestrians and cyclists. Over 375 cyclists and 127 pedestrians alone use the bridge in the morning peak hour during the week and almost equal numbers at 301 cyclists and 300 pedestrians in a peak hour on a Saturday morning. Daily weekday figures are in the order of 2200 users and almost 2400 on a Saturday. The data confirms the attractiveness of the bridge as a key access route for commuter cyclists with high use during morning and afternoon peak periods.

Pedestrian and cyclist numbers have doubled over the last seven years and the intense development of the Victoria Street East precinct, which is only partly complete, will add several thousand new residents to the immediate vicinity of the bridge, who will use the bridge to access the parklands in Boroondara. The opening of the Darebin Main Yarra Trail link in March 2018 can also be expected to significantly increase numbers.

Communication with bridge users will be crucial in the lead-up to and throughout the construction period of the project.

##### **4.2 Safety issues**

There are a number of issues associated with the existing northern land bridge and the path. Notably, the path is excessively steep, narrow and is not disability compliant.

The clear width of 1.73 m between handrails is significantly less than the minimum recommended in standards and there is no setback clearance for the handrails.

An independent Road Safety Audit has confirmed these issues and the non compliance with standards.

Incidents have occurred in the past involving pedestrians and cyclists. The narrow path width and its steepness have been contributing factors.

##### **4.3 Land bridge condition**

In addition to safety concerns created by the geometry and width issues, the northern land bridge is in overall poor condition and is showing signs of structural failure.

Since 2013, propping of the failing timber beams and regular structural assessments have been undertaken. In December 2017 further work was undertaken to support the land bridge.

Without urgent attention and reconstruction, the condition of the Walmer Street land bridge is expected to continue to deteriorate.

#### 4.4 Design changes and approval

The original design for the replacement of the northern land bridge and approach span was modified to meet Heritage Council's requirements. These changes included:

- Construction of 2.4m wide shared path between handrails across a 21.5m span from the Walmer Street River bridge matching the width of the existing river bridge
- Construction of tapered concrete deck ranging from 2.4m to 3.3m wide across a 16.6m span and continuation of a 3.3m wide structure going north towards Young Street
- Change the permeability of the perforated metal infill panels to improve visibility
- Provision of mahogany coloured protective coating across all steelwork.

A conditional permit has been received from Heritage Victoria to proceed with the proposal. All other approvals from the relevant authorities are also in place.

### 5. **Consultation/communication**

Council officers have previously completed community consultation and all approvals are in place for the replacement of the land bridge in the City of Boroondara.

There is strong community interest and support for the proposed bridge replacement.

### 6. **Financial and resource implications**

Council's 2021-22 October amended budget contains a total allocation of \$2,396,880 for the replacement of the Walmer Street northern approach in Kew, including \$1,500,000 Federal Government Grant under the bicycle network grants (**Attachment 2**).

**The project budget is as follows:**

Federal Government Grant funding of \$ 1500,000.00 is included in the below budgets.

2021-22 Budget: Account No. 72585	\$ 1,000,000.00
2022-23 Budget: Account No. 72585	\$ 1,396,880.00
<b>Total Project Budget</b>	<b>\$ 2,396,880.00</b>

Less 2021-22 Actuals	
Design Consultant fees	\$ 124,651.00

<b>Total Available Budget for Construction</b>	<b>\$ 2,272,229.00</b>
--	------------------------

**Proposed Project Expenditure:**

Construction Cost (Contract No 2021/202)	\$ 2,985,938.99
Other project costs	\$ 298,593.90
<b>Total Construction Cost</b>	<b>\$ 3,284,532.89</b>

<b>Budget Shortfall</b>	<b>\$ 1,012,303.89</b>
-------------------------	------------------------

The total project cost is in excess of the allocated project budget, and the budget shortfall of \$1,012,303.89 to be funded from additional Federal Government funding which has been committed in writing on 31 March 2022, for an additional \$1M grant, subject to execution of Deed of Agreement and Council has acknowledged this commitment (**Attachment 3 and Attachment 4**).

Whilst standard process with obtaining quantity surveyor (QS) cost estimates occurred to guide budgets, actual tender costs reflect significant steel price escalation in the market and variation in soil removal costs from QS to tender.

The remaining shortfall of \$12,303.89 should we receive the \$1M grant will be available from the savings from the below cost centre.

2021-22 Budget: Account No. 72691.	
Minor Bridge rehabilitation	\$12,303.89

<b>Total available budget to cover shortfall</b>	<b>\$1,012,303.89</b>
--	-----------------------

In the unlikely event that the additional \$1M funding deed is not executed, the following cost centres will enable delivery of the Walmer Street Bridge. With the final delivery of the nominated programs to be extended over two years.

• 2021-22 Budget: Account No. 72939.	\$300,000
Concrete drain relining	
• 2021-22 Budget: Account No. 72691.	\$60,000
Minor Bridge rehabilitation	
• 2021-22 Budget: Account No. 71996.	\$130,000

## Retaining wall

• 2022-23 Budget: Account No. 72099 Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Safety Audit Implementation	\$250,000
• 2022-23 Budget: Account No. 71659 Bicycle Strategy Implementation	\$100,000
• 2022-23 Budget: Account No. 71729 Unscheduled Footpath Works	\$172,303.89
<b>Total available budget to cover shortfall</b>	<b>\$1,012,303.89</b>

**7. Governance issues**

The implications of this report have been assessed in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities.

The officers responsible for this report have no direct or indirect interests requiring disclosure.

This tender process has been carried out in accordance with the requirements of Council's Contracts and Tendering Probity Policy and Council's Procurement Policy.

**8. Social and environmental issues**

The Walmer Street Bridge provides a vital link to the community in Kew, Richmond and Abbotsford. For the Kew residents that live in the vicinity of Walmer Street, the bridge provides walking and cycling access to Victoria Gardens Shopping Centre, the strip shopping on Victoria Street, Richmond, and access to public transport with Tram 109 along Victoria Street.

The delivery of the Walmer Street bridge northern approach spans replacement will play a vital role in improving and maintaining the health and wellbeing of the community.

**9. Evaluation and review**

The tender evaluation report is provided as **Confidential Attachment 1.**

As a result of the tender evaluation, the evaluation panel recommends that Council award Contract No. 2021/202, Walmer Street bridge northern approach spans replacement to:

- Infracon Group Pty Ltd ACN 100668344)

for a total cost of \$3,284,532.89 (including GST). The cost to Council after the return of the GST Tax Input Credits (\$298,593.90) is \$2,985,938.99.



**Manager:** **Christine White, Manager Capital Projects**

**Report officers:** Masha Patikirikorale, Civil Projects Engineer  
Cid Mariani, Coordinator Civil Projects  
Bhushan Jani, Coordinator Transport Management



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Infrastructure, Transport,**  
**Regional Development and Communications**

*File reference: CDG1053*

Mr Daniel Freer  
Director Environment and Infrastructure  
Boroondara City Council  
Locked Bag 1  
CAMBERWELL VIC 3124

Dear Mr Freer

**Agreement – Community Development Grants Programme – CDG1053 – Kew-Walmer Street Bridge Upgrade project**

I refer to the approval of funding of up to \$1,500,000 (GST exclusive) under the Community Development Grants Programme (CDG) for the Kew-Walmer Street Bridge Upgrade project.

Attached is a copy of the Agreement relating to the provision of this funding and includes the settling of other details, including confirmation of final cost estimates.

Please note, your first progress report is due on **1 June 2022**. A CDG Reporting Pack will be forwarded under separate cover. It is mandatory that you use these templates when providing your progress and final reports.

It is important that you familiarise yourself with the terms and conditions of the Agreement and ensure that you understand the nature and extent of your obligations under the Agreement before signing. We strongly recommend that you obtain independent legal advice about the effect and consequences of the Agreement before signing.

Please note, any financial commitments made or construction works commenced prior to the Agreement being signed by both parties is done at your own risk.

Once you are satisfied with the Agreement please print a copy and arrange for it to be signed by the appropriate signatory, witnessed and returned to the Department at [CDG.Projects@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:CDG.Projects@infrastructure.gov.au)

The offer to contract with the Commonwealth on the terms and conditions set out in the Agreement may lapse if you fail to provide the required documents to the Department within four weeks of the date of this letter.

GPO Box 594 Canberra ACT 2601 Australia • Telephone: 02 6274 7111  
Website: [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au) • ABN 86 267 354 017

Following execution of the Agreement by the Department, the Agreement will be returned for your records.

If you have any questions regarding the offer, please contact Ian Richardson on 02 6393 4015.

Yours sincerely



Meghan Hibbert  
Assistant Secretary  
Regional Programs Branch  
6 April 2022



---

**The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP**

---

**Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development  
Leader of The Nationals  
Federal Member for New England**

Ref: MC22-002227

Mr Phillip Storer  
Chief Executive Officer  
City of Boorondara  
Private Bag 1  
CAMBERWELL VIC 3124

31 March 2022

Via: [boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:boroondara@boroondara.vic.gov.au)

Dear Mr Storer

I am writing to confirm the Australian Government's commitment to provide a further \$1 million for the Kew-Walmer Street Bridge Upgrade (the Project). I note the planning that has already been undertaken as part of our Government's \$1.5 million investment.

The commitment will be delivered by the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications through the Community Development Grants Programme.

The Australian Government is committed to supporting local communities to prosper and grow. Local infrastructure projects are critical if we want to boost economic growth and improve local amenities and facilities.

A Departmental Officer will contact you shortly to discuss the next steps. A request for information will be required to provide sufficient detail on your project enabling the Department to undertake an assessment of the Project before final funding approval and negotiation of a Deed of Agreement. Whilst this letter confirms the commitment to your project, funding of up to \$1 million is contingent upon execution of a Deed of Agreement.

I recommend City of Boorondara does not enter into financial commitments or begin work on the Project until such time a Deed of Agreement has been signed with the Government.

I wish you every success and look forward to seeing the Project completed.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Barnaby Joyce'.

Barnaby Joyce MP

---

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP  
Parliament House Canberra | (02) 6277 7520 | [minister.joyce@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:minister.joyce@infrastructure.gov.au)  
PO Box 963, Tamworth NSW 2340



6 April 2022

The Hon Barnaby Joyce MP  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development  
Leader of The Nationals  
Federal Member for New England

By Email: [minister.joyce@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:minister.joyce@infrastructure.gov.au)

Dear Deputy Prime Minister Joyce,

Thank you for your letter of 31 March 2022 confirming the Australian Government's commitment to provide a further \$1 million for the Kew- Walmer Street Bridge Upgrade project.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the contribution by the Australian Government and extend our thanks for the additional funding.

This additional funding will play a key role in delivering this new highly valued piece of infrastructure to meet current and future local and regional community needs.

Council is keen to deliver this project given the existing structural, safety and access issues with the existing bridge and intends to consider the awarding of the tender for the new bridge on 26 April 2022.

To this end, we look forward to executing the Deed of Agreement for the additional funding in the short term.

Should you have any further queries regarding this matter please contact Jim Hondrakis, Manager Traffic and Transport on 9278 4546 or [jim.hondrakis@boroondara.vic.gov.au](mailto:jim.hondrakis@boroondara.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jane Addis", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Jane Addis  
**MAYOR**

