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1.0 POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Council have a duty of care to maintain Council established footpaths.

2.0 OBJECTIVE

2.1 To ensure safe access for pedestrians and other users of Council's footpaths. This policy will enable Council to be proactive in identifying hazards and risks associated with the approved footpath network and to limit the number of possible public liability claims.

3.0 SCOPE

3.1 This policy will apply to all Council maintained footpaths within the Municipality.

4.0 PROCEDURE

ASSESSMENT

4.1 Identification and Recording

- (i) The two methods of discovering a hazard are by proactive and reactive inspections. Once identified, details of the failed footpath are recorded into a database for evaluation.
- (ii) Formalised inspections of all footpaths in townships conducted at programmed frequencies determined by location, type, estimated number of pedestrians and previous history. A newly constructed footpath once completed and accepted is placed on the program for routine inspections.

4.2 Reactive Inspections


- (i) Verbal or written reports/complaints from the general public or council staff – may or may not have been discovered as a result of an incident or insurance claim. The effected footpath is then inspected and evaluated by the appropriate officer.

4.3 Evaluation of Hazards

- (i) The identified footpath is evaluated for the severity of the hazard and the risk. The two major characteristics used in evaluating the risk are the Physical and Environmental conditions of the footpath. The evaluation of these characteristics rate the hazard as either low, medium or high, which is then used to prioritise footpath repairs and the action response period. Evaluating the footpath will also assist in selecting the maintenance/repair procedure to prevent the failure from reoccurring.

4.4 Physical Evaluation

- (i) Vertical Displacement – The degree of any step or vertical displacement in adjoining paving units measured in millimetres. This displacement can be caused by tree roots, differential settlement of the supporting

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ground, erosion of material from under the path or pavers, poor construction techniques, damage by construction traffic, subsidence of utility trenches etc.

- (ii) Uneven Surface – The degree to which the surface is uneven due to previous maintenance repairs, patching, uplifting/cracking due to roots or heavy vehicle usage. When the sides adjacent to the footpath are lower than the level of the footpath, this is also considered an uneven hazard.
- (iii) Slipperiness – The degree to which the surface finish is slippery due to inherent characteristics of the paving material, the paving manufacturing process, water, or wear and tear.
- (iv) Environmental Evaluation relates to external influences surrounding the footpaths such as frequency and type of pedestrian use.
- (v) Lighting – Day and night lighting, and shadows that could reduce visibility or camouflage broken or misaligned surfaces.

4.4 Assessing Footpath Risk Rating

- (i) The gathered footpath physical and environmental properties are plotted into Table 4.4 “Assessing footpath Risk Rating” to rate the hazard. In the event that there are two or more hazards that indicate that the footpath requires repair, adopt the worst-case scenario for the rating. It should be noted that in this case, all of the hazards should be addressed to avoid a failure from re-occurring at the same time.

Table 4.4 Assessing Footpath Risk Rating


<i>UNEVENNESS/SLIPPERINESS</i>					
	<i>Extreme</i>	<i>Very</i>	<i>Uneven</i>	<i>Slight</i>	<i>Negligible</i>
<i>>30</i>	VH	VH	VH	VH	VH
<i>20-30</i>	VH	VH	H	H	M
<i>10-20</i>	H	H	H	M	M
<i>5-10</i>	H	H	M	M	L
<i><5</i>	L	L	L	L	L

TRIP SIZE
(mm)

CONTROL OF RISK EXPOSURE

4.5 Risk Rating Assessment

- (i) The Risk Rating Assessment is then referred to Table 4.3 Risk Action Response, so as to identify an appropriate Control Mechanism and Response Time. A work instruction request is then generated and distributed for action. Review of Council’s practice will be undertaken annually to determine the suitability of response times with regard to the number of risks identified and the available resources.
- (ii) There are three control measures that will be implemented depending on the priority rating value of the risk as shown in Table 4.6 Risk Action Response:

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- Low – Action is to be taken when resources are available
- Medium – make the area safe if possible and then place the hazard into the maintenance programme
- High – Isolate the affected area immediately to exclude access to the site by the erection of temporary barriers or barricades. Repair or replace the failed area.

4.6 Risk Action Response Time

- (i) There are three response times that will require action depending on the priority rating value of the risk, as shown in Table 4.6 Risk Action Response.
- Low – As resources permit
 - Medium – Within 30 days
 - High – Within 2 days
- (ii) Depending on the severity of the hazard, differing methods can be adopted to reduce the risk of the hazard causing an incident. Not only should the failure be rectified, but the cause should also be examined to reduce failure from occurring again.

Table 4.6 Risk Action Response


PRIORITY	CONTROL MECHANISM	RESPONSE TIME
Low	Consideration should be given as to whether action needs to be taken	As resources permit
Medium	Program for maintenance works	Within 30 days
High	Make safe immediately, effect repairs	Within 2 days

4.7 Vehicular Movement

- (i) Failure of footpaths caused by vehicular movement could have the repaired footpath strengthened, or access denied to the area. If the footpath has to be replaced and used as a vehicle access, the footpath should be strengthened. Strengthening of the footpath can be gained by placing reinforcement in concrete, with galvanised dowels or key joints connecting the individual slabs to reduce vertical displacement between slabs. Highly visible Bollards could also be used to prohibit access and stop vehicular movement on the footpath.

4.8 Tree Root Regrowth

- (i) Footpath failure due to tree root intrusion can reoccur unless the tree root is removed. Reference should be made to Council's Tree Policy for treatment of intrusion by tree roots.

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4.9 Minor Displacement

- (i) In the case where the footpaths have lifted in a minor vertical displacement, rectification could be achieved by grinding down the high side of the displacement. In the event where the footpath has dropped due to settlement resulting in a minor vertical displacement, rectification could be achieved by resurfacing (as in the case of gravel footpaths) or by lifting the footpath (concrete paved) and placing material such as a sand cement to hold the footpath to the correct level.

FREQUENCY OF EVALUATION

4.10 Inspection Frequency

- (i) Once all footpaths have been initially evaluated and rated, it is proposed that each township area will be re-inspected and re-evaluated periodically based on the risk rating as shown in Table 4.10 – Inspection Frequency.


Table 4.10 Inspection Frequency

LOCATION	INSPECTION FREQUENCY
Notification – associated with a fall reported	24 hours
Notification – by public request	48 hours
Low/Medium/High Pedestrian Volumes	Annually

PROGRAMMED STRATEGY, BUDGET AND RESOURCES

4.11 Budget Planning

- (i) Council's footpaths will be inspected prior to setting the budget each year. This will enable resources to be allocated towards areas that are required.

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Robert Higgins
General Manager