

ADVERTISED PLAN

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Response to Council RFI (P/2025/6425)
3 Nortons Lane, Wantirna South

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Introduction

Planning approval is being sought for the proposed development of the land parcel addressed as 3 Nortons Lane in Wantirna South, for the purpose of a primary school (Ascension College).

The current planning application is pursuant to the delivery of Stage 1 of Ascension College.

The planning permit application (Ref No. P/2025/6425) was submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning on 10 September 2025. Ratio Consultants prepared a Transport Impact Assessment report (22781T-REP01-F01, dated 09 September 2025) which formed part of the town planning submission.

The application was referred to Knox City Council for comment.

Upon their review of the application, Council issued a Request for Further Information (RFI) letter on 03 October 2025. Amongst other items, the RFI raised various preliminary items relating to 'road access' and 'traffic and intersection safety'. Council's comments on each issue have been reproduced below verbatim and in *italics* for reference.

Road Access

Council raises concerns regarding the suitability of Nortons Lane as the primary access route to the proposed primary school. Nortons Lane is currently an unsealed road, which may not be adequate to support the increased traffic volumes associated with a new primary school.

Furthermore, the submitted documentation appears to be silent on any immediate infrastructure works or upgrades to Nortons Lane to accommodate the Stage 1 proposal of the primary school. The Transport Impact Assessment predominantly references future infrastructure improvements following the completion of the development approved under Planning Scheme Amendment C194knox, rather than addressing current access requirements.

While the Transport Impact Assessment discusses the potential widening of the road reserve and the provision of a new pedestrian footpath, it does not address the presence of sites of biological significance along Nortons Lane. These environmentally sensitive areas may pose constraints on future road and infrastructure upgrades and should be considered in any future planning or design responses.

Traffic and Intersection Safety

Concerns have also been raised about the safety of the intersection at Nortons Lane and High Street. The intersection is currently uncontrolled, lacking traffic signals and is located on a downhill section of High Street. These factors contribute to limited visibility and challenging traffic conditions, increasing the potential risk of accidents, particularly during peak school drop-off and pick-up times.

It also appears that the proposed primary school is relying on future infrastructure upgrades associated with the broader development under Planning Scheme Amendment C194knox. However, it is considered that the primary school must be capable of operating independently and should provide the necessary supporting infrastructure as part of its initial development, rather than deferring critical upgrades to a later stage.

The Transport Impact Assessment indicates that the permit applicant proposes to implement a Transport Management Plan (TMP), which would be distributed to all staff and parents of enrolled students. Should a permit be granted, Council requests that conditions be included to ensure that all provisions, recommendations and requirements of the endorsed TMP are fully implemented and adhered to. Furthermore, it is considered appropriate that a condition be included to allow for the implementation of remedial measures in the event that traffic issues arise following the commencement of the primary school's operation.

For example: upon commencement of the use, traffic flow along Nortons Lane must not be adversely affected. In the event of any impacts to traffic flow and congestion or any concerns reported to Council, remedial measures must be undertaken as soon as possible to address the issue as directed by, and to the satisfaction of the responsible authority.

This letter has been prepared in response to the abovementioned Council items.

Development Proposal

It is proposed to develop the land parcel addressed as 3 Nortons Lane in Wantirna South for the purpose of a primary school (Ascension College).

The current planning permit application is pursuant to Stage 1 of Ascension College.

The area of works for Stage 1 is limited to the eastern portion of the site only and seeks to provide various portable classrooms, staff and student amenities, various playground areas and a soccer field within the area of works.

No changes outside the area of works are proposed as part of this application and as such, the existing buildings and vegetation that occupies the western portion of the site will all be retained throughout Stage 1.

Further consultation with the school has revealed that a staged delivery of students over time can now be accommodated. Specifically, the proposed student and staff numbers across Stage 1 for the proposed full build out of the staff and student numbers proposed for the school are described in Table 1.

A total of 19 car parking spaces (inclusive of one (1) accessible space) are proposed on-site for the initial build out phase of development. One (1) bus parking bay is also proposed on-site.

Vehicle access to/from the site is proposed via a 7.0-metre-wide crossover to/from Nortons Lane at the southeast corner of the site.

A roundabout is proposed at the western end of the main car parking area for the purpose of providing a convenient location for vehicles to turnaround on-site.

Response to Council Comments – Road Access

Nortons Lane

Nortons Lane is a discontinuous road, aligned in a north-south direction between High Street Road and its terminus approximately 800 metres to the south.

There are three (3) key components to the configuration of the Nortons Lane carriageway, which are noted below:

- For approximately the first 90 metres (starting from High Street Road), Nortons Lane is provided with a sealed double width carriageway;
- Between this transition point and the southern access point to/from Nortons Park, Nortons Lane is provided with an unsealed double width carriageway; and
- To the south of the southern Nortons Park access point and the road's terminus, an unsealed single width carriageway is provided.

For the purpose of this assessment, Nortons Lane is considered to operate as an unsealed road.

In order to understand the traffic carrying capacity of Nortons Lane in its existing unsealed configuration, reference is made to the 'Unsealed Roads Best Practice Guide' that was published by the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB) in 2020.

Section 2.5.3 within the ARRB guide recommends that an unsealed road should be sealed if traffic volumes exceed 250 vehicles per day.

For assessment purposes, 250 vehicles per day will be adopted as the maximum daily traffic capacity for Nortons Lane in its current configuration. Daily traffic volumes exceeding 250 will trigger a requirement for the carriageway to be sealed.

Existing Traffic Volumes

To understand existing traffic volumes along Nortons Lane, a tube count survey was undertaken for a weeklong period commencing on Thursday 20 November 2025.

The tube counter was installed to the south of the southern access point to/from Nortons Park (i.e. at the commencement of the single width section of the road), as the subject site will take access via the single width section.

The daily and school peak hour volumes recorded by the tube counter are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Tube Count Survey Results

Day	Date	Daily Vehicles	8:00am-9:00am	3:00pm-4:00pm
Monday	24/11/2025	73 veh	5 veh	6 veh
Tuesday	25/11/2025	69 veh	0 veh	4 veh
Wednesday	26/11/2025	117 veh	8 veh	9 veh
Thursday	20/11/2025	78 veh	7 veh	2 veh
Friday	21/11/2025	92 veh	8 veh	9 veh
Average		86 veh	6 veh	6 veh

The results presented in Table 2 indicate the following key points:

- The single width section of Nortons Lane carries a very low volume during both the morning and afternoon school peak hour across the week; and
- Nortons Lane carries an average of 86 vehicles per day across the week. This infers that the road has capacity for an additional 164 vehicles before a requirement for the carriageway to be sealed is triggered based on the ARRB Guideline.

Traffic Assessment

The following traffic generation rates were adopted within Section 8 of the Transport Impact Assessment report that was provided as part of the initial town planning application:

- AM Peak Hour - 1.2 vehicle trips / student;
- PM Peak Hour - 1.0 vehicle trips / student; and
- Daily - 2.6 vehicle trips / student.

Further to this, the permit applicant has advised that the school will offer a private bus service to families whose child(ren) are enrolled at the school. For families that sign up for this service, a school bus will pick up students from their house and drive them to school each morning and then drive these students' home in the afternoon.

In order to present a conservative assessment on the high side, it has been assumed that half of students enrolled at the school will use the bus service. This would naturally be enforced and managed via a Transport Management Plan for the school.

The above traffic generation rates have been applied to the number of students expected to be driven to school each year within Stage 1 in order to estimate the level of traffic that will be generated by the school during the morning and afternoon peak hours and each day. These traffic generation estimates are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Estimated Traffic Generation

Year	Student numbers assumed driven to school [1]	AM Vehicle Trips	PM Vehicle Trips	Daily Vehicle Trips
2027 (Grades P-1)	25	30 vph	25 vph	65 vpd
2028 (Grades P-2)	35	42 vph	35 vph	91 vpd
2029 (Grades P-3)	40	48 vph	40 vph	104 vpd
2030 (Grades P-4)	50	60 vph	50 vph	130 vpd
2031 (Grades P-5)	60	72 vph	60 vph	156 vpd
2032 (Grades P-6)	65	78 vph	65 vph	169 vpd
2033 (Grades P-6)	70	84 vph	70 vph	182 vpd
2034 (Grades P-6)	75	90 vph	75 vph	195 vpd

[1] 50% of the maximum number of students for that year to account for students using the bus service.

Critically, Table 3 suggests that the estimated level of daily traffic generated by the school will be able to be accommodated by the existing unsealed configuration of Nortons Lane up until 2031.

Beyond this point, the total daily traffic volumes will exceed 250 vehicles, thereby triggering the requirement that the carriageway be sealed.

Proposed Mitigating Works

The majority of vehicle trips generated by the school will comprise parents dropping-off / picking-up their child(ren). These trips are short term in nature and will comprise an inbound and outbound movement along Nortons Lane during each peak period.

As described previously, between the southern Nortons Park access point and the Nortons Lane terminus, the road is configured with an unsealed single width carriageway.

It is proposed to provide passing area widenings throughout this section in order to assist in facilitating two-way vehicle movements along the single width section of the carriageway.

The passing areas will comprise a gravel shoulder provided on one side of the carriageway that is wide and long enough for a vehicle to park in and allow a vehicle travelling in the opposing direction to pass. The passing areas will be provided in conjunction with the initial delivery of the school.

Passing areas should be provided at no greater than 50 metre intervals in suitable locations when having regard for civil and ecological constraints. Given these constraints, it is recommended that the exact location of the passing areas can be determined at later stage of the project.

Response to Council Comments – Traffic & Intersection Safety

A letter was received from the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) on 18 November 2025 wherein the Head, Transport for Victoria has objected to grant a permit on the basis of two (2) grounds of refusal.

One of the grounds of refusal relates to concerns that the development proposal will have a detrimental impact on the operation and safety of the Nortons Lane / High Street Road intersection.

It is noted that DTP's concerns about the Nortons Lane / High Street Road intersection are essentially the same as the concerns raised within the Council RFI.

A separate letter has been prepared by Ratio Consultants (22781T-LET02-F01) to respond to the DTP objection letter. The discussion provided within this letter is considered to provide a robust response to the concerns of the impact to this intersection that have been raised by both Council and DTP.

A copy of the DTP letter can be provided to Council if required.

Conclusion

Nortons Lane is proposed to be utilised primarily in its existing configuration to provide vehicle access to/from the subject site.

Passing area widenings are proposed throughout the single width section of the carriageway to assist in facilitating two-way vehicle movements along this section of the road, with the passing areas to be provided in conjunction with the initial delivery of the school.

With the provision of these passing areas, the existing unsealed configuration of Nortons Lane is expected to be able to accommodate the traffic generated by the subject site up until 2031.

Beyond this point, continued increases in student and staff numbers will result in the total daily traffic volumes along Nortons Lane exceeding 250 vehicles, thereby triggering the requirement that the carriageway be sealed.

Therefore, at this time the permit applicant will be required to either keep student and staff numbers at the 2031 level or provide a commitment to facilitate the sealing of the Nortons Lane carriageway.

We trust that this letter provides adequate details regarding the usage of Nortons Lane to provide vehicle access to/from the subject site to address Council's RFI items raised.

Should you have any questions or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Jackson Hamill-Beach or the undersigned on (03) 9429 3111.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Greenland', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Greenland
Director: Transport
Ratio Consultants Pty Ltd