

\$6.4m bill for repair work

Troubled bridges

Fiona Hudson

city editor

ANOTHER facelift for historic Princes Bridge including rust-proofing, stronger rivets and more paint will cost rate-payers \$3.7 million.

The scaffolding has only just come down after a \$600,000 restoration of the heritage-listed bridge earlier this year.

The extra repairs to the St Kilda Rd gateway are among \$6.4 million worth of work needed to fix 13 Melbourne bridges, a council report reveals.

The report shows Yarra Park footbridge, used by thousands of sports fans to reach the MCG and tennis centre, barely meets minimum council standards.

About \$40,000 must be spent replacing timber planks and asphalt on the bridge on the east side of the MCG, council officers said.

The report also shows the award-winning Yarra Footbridge leading to Southgate has minor cracks and needs \$95,000 of work.

Council officers found the Arden St bridge across Moonee Ponds Creek in the worst condition, and have earmarked \$400,000 to strengthen and patch it up. They rated the bridge 2.9 out of five.

"A score below three indicates the structure has an unacceptable risk profile," the report says.

"If a bridge rating falls below three urgent action is required to manage the immediate risk."

The report, titled *The Bridges of Melbourne City*, sets out a five-year plan for the structures.

It will be presented to the Melbourne City Council tonight.

City Services committee chairwoman Cr Kimberley Kitching said the bridge management plan would help keep the structures "in good nick". "There's no safety problems ... but we can't just leave them, you have to

UNDER SCRUTINY

Condition of our inner-city bridges. Score out of five



PRINCES BRIDGE Repairs needed: CBD Built: 1888 \$3.75 million to strengthen, remove rust and repaint



YARRAPARK FOOTBRIDGE Repairs: Jolimont Built: 1970 \$40,000 to replace damaged planks and asphalt



QUEENS BRIDGE Repairs: CBD Built: 1889 \$405,000 to strengthen, repair steel and repaint



4.3
YARRA FOOTBRIDGE
Built: 1995
Repairs: \$95,000 to fix cracks in concrete piers



ARDEN ST Repairs: Nth Melbourne Built: 1923 \$400,000 to strengthen



MORELL BRIDGE Repairs: Sth Yarra Built: 1899 \$473,000 to patch up and paint



MACAULAY RD Repairs: Kensington Built: 1923 \$680,000 to strengthen

keep up maintenance," she said. "It's also about getting everything spilt and span for the Commonwealth Games."

Cr Kitching said many city bridges were more

than 100 years old and had outlived their expected life span.

The Princes Bridge paint job was costly because lead-based paint had to be removed under

careful conditions, Cr Kitching said.

Changed state government standards meant four bridges — the Princes, Queens, Arden St and Macaulay Rd —

must be strengthened, she said.

Lord Mayor John So said yesterday Princes Bridge was a much-loved city landmark.

"Princes Bridge links

the city centre with St Kilda Rd and Southbank," he said. "We want to ensure this special piece of Melbourne's history is looked after and can cope with the demands of a modern city."