

# A D H O C K E R Y

from LEX LOCI ... 22 FEBRUARY 2016

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*An occasional one-pager from The Public Land Consultancy*

## *Underneath Punt Road*



The South Yarra to St Kilda water main was originally constructed in the 1890s, making it one of Melbourne's oldest operational water mains.

As every Melbourne driver knows, Punt Road has been a catastrophe for decades. The 60 year-old Public Acquisition Overlay (PAO) down its eastern side seems to be in hibernation (Lex Loci thinks it should be used for a light rail line – but that's another story). Even older was the corroded water main below the road's surface, dating from the 1890s.

Last year Melbourne Water replaced the water main, along an alignment which took in various residential streets and part of Fawkner Park, as well as stretches of Punt Road itself. Amongst the many approvals required, the most basic was tenure: by what right can Melbourne Water occupy this subterranean land?

For the answer, we turn to Government Gazette G29 of 18 July 2002, page 1704. Here we find the authority for water supply and drainage services, amongst other things, to occupy strata over or under Government roads (which Punt Road, of course, is).

So below the surface, water continues to flow to 97,000 homes and businesses. And up above, roughly the same number of drivers, stuck in traffic jams, don't even think about what's below them...

See you there!  
Lex Loci