



## REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

### 1. TITLE OF INITIATIVE / SUBMISSION:

Change in South Australian Police service delivery in the Poochera community and surrounding district pastoral properties.

### 2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED:

Poochera has a population of 36, with a total population for the district of 185. Poochera Police Station is situated on the Eyre Highway, 47 kilometres east from Wirrulla and 35 kilometres west from Minnipa which have police stations.

Poochera is a typical small grain belt town situated on the obligatory railway siding. The town itself was surveyed in 1920 and is named after a nearby hill. The town has limited resources with the Hotel and Roadhouse being the main businesses. The Viterra Limited silos receive grain during cropping season.

Poochera Police Station is a single person police station currently under Clause 14 of the Police Officers Award. It has been vacant since June 2009. It has been advertised in the Police Gazette on 5 occasions without any applicants.

Considerations of Poochera, Minnipa and Wirrulla police station workloads, demographic statistics, and available options to service the area have been undertaken and the results have indicated significant scope exists with the existing police jurisdictions to fully service Poochera area.

The proposal under consideration is to close the Poochera police station, that is staffed by one staff member at the rank of Brevet Sergeant, and have the Poochera community and surrounding district pastoral properties serviced by both the Minnipa and Wirrulla police stations.

In particular, it is proposed that the Minnipa police station will provide public counter and patrol functions for the Poochera township and part of the district. The remainder of the district will be managed by Wirrulla Police Station.

This proposed model of policing for the Poochera Police Station has been in operation since the station became vacant.

### 3. REGION(S) IMPACTED: (e.g. Local Service Area or simply attach map with affected area highlighted)

Eyre and Western Local Service Area (LSA) policing jurisdictions. Appendix A includes maps highlighting the Poochera, Minnipa and Wirrulla policing jurisdictions.

**4. STAKEHOLDERS AFFECTED BY THE ISSUE / INITIATIVE:**

**Internal**

- Commissioner of Police
- Assistant Commissioner Northern Operations Services (jurisdiction responsibilities for Eyre and Western LSA)
- Poochera Police Station
- Minnipa Police Station
- Wirrulla Police Station

**External Government and Industry**

Nil

**Federal Government**

- Federal Member for Grey Rowan Ramsey MP

**State Government**

- State Member for Flinders Peter Treloar MP
- Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure
- Families SA
- Country Fire Service Region 6
- Primary Industries and Resources SA
- Department for Environment and Natural Resources
- SA Ambulance Service
- SA Tourism Commission

**Local Government**

- District Council of Streaky Bay

**Industry**

- Vittera Limited

**Local Organisations**

- Eyre Regional Development Board
- Barnes Street Committee

**5. STAKEHOLDERS CONSULTED:** *(Indicate who the consultation was with)*

Effective 30<sup>th</sup> of December 2011, all external government, local organisations and internal stakeholder (i.e. neighbouring Police Stations) were consulted.

**5.1 Consulted with the Regional Communities Consultative Council:**  
*(Tick appropriate box).*

YES

NO

**6. CONSULTATION** *(For each consultation indicate (1) what process was undertaken to consult [e.g. mail outs, presentations, advertisements, forums, public meetings], (2) when consultation occurred, (3) where the consultation occurred, and (4) how many people attended the consultation).*

Effective 29<sup>th</sup> of December 2011, a letter was sent to the all nominated stakeholders (as listed in Section 5) that indicated the proposed change in service provision:

The proposal under consideration is to close the Poochera Police Station and have the Poochera community and surrounding district pastoral properties

serviced by both the Minnipa and Wirrulla police stations. Stakeholders were invited to provide a written submission detailing any concerns, issues or comments that they feel need to be considered prior to this proposal being progressed. The allocated deadline provided was the 30<sup>th</sup> of January 2012.

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2012, five letters were received from across the following nominated internal, external government and industry and local organisations stakeholder groups.

### **External Government and Industry**

#### **State Government**

- State Member for Flinders Peter Treloar MP
- Country Fire Service Region 6
- SA Ambulance Service

#### **Local Government**

- District Council of Streaky Bay

#### **Local Organisations**

- Eyre Regional Development Board

In addition to this a public meeting was held at the Poochera Sporting Complex on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February 2012. There were comments expressed by 16 attendees of a Community Consultation about the changing of police service to the Poochera policing district.

Upon the reception of all submissions, all feedback was examined.

### **7. SUMMARY OF IMPACTS: (Provide a summary statement of the impacts).**

A summary of the key comments received at the Public Consultation Meeting and expressed in the letters as listed below.

- No concerns or implications regarding the proposal;
- Characteristics of the Poochera region that will necessitate the need for a police service (i.e. potential mining exploration in the district, existence of causal factors to commit crime [e.g. township being situated on the Eyre Highway]);
- Capability of neighbouring police stations to provide an adequate police service in the past (i.e. to provide a full dedication to the area, not meeting appointments, phone calls not being answered, and appropriate attention to traffic through the township);
- Potential affects on health (i.e. feeling of individual/home/business security and safety);
- Disappointment at the change of policing service as Poochera will lose a member of the community.

The proposal to change the method of service provision in the area will ensure that staff at the adjoining policing jurisdictions will provide a service in the area. Whilst in the past, Minnipa, Wirrulla, Streaky Bay and Wudinna Police Stations have provided a supportive function, the service change that is proposed will provide a commitment to addressing crime and policing issues in the region.

The Poochera Police Station has been vacant since June 2009, when the Brevet Sergeant transferred from the area. Since then the district has been policed effectively utilising police within the cluster district from Streaky Bay, Wirrulla, Minnipa and Wudinna. Additionally the Eyre Highway has been

policed by the Eyre and Western Highway Patrol members which has seen the unit strength increased by three members recently. The additional workload from Poochera on the other policing districts has been minimal and easily absorbed within their normal duties. The crime statistics since the vacation of an officer at Poochera has been examined and crime has been minimal with an actual decrease in statistics in the past two years.

**7.1 ECONOMIC FACTORS** ( For each factor describe (1) current status, (2) positive and negative implications of the issue for the region over the short, medium and long term, (3) jobs and jobs creation, (4) investment, and (5) affect on population.

**Factor 1:** Change of service provision to the Poochera community and surrounding pastoral properties

(1) Police services are currently been carried out by the staff member at the Poochera police station. (has been vacant since June 2009) Minnipa, Wirrulla and Streaky Bay police stations provide a back up service when required.

(2) **Positive:** - Staffing resources at Minnipa police station will address the majority of the taskings within the Poochera region.

- The change in service provision will result in a restructured use of policing resources on the Eyre Peninsula.

- Traffic responsibilities will be assumed by Eyre and Western Highway Patrol section and other stations on the Eyre Highway.

- The closing of the Poochera Police Station will see additional police districts cover the Poochera policing area.

**Negative:** - The Eyre and Western LSA budget may need to cover extra overtime and vehicle use.

- Costs associated with the closure and transfer of the staff member situated at Poochera police station.

(3) The current staff member of the Poochera police station (currently vacant) will need to be transferred to another police district.

(4) Investment in resources from Minnipa and Wirrulla to servicing the needs of the Poochera community. (which is expected to be minimal as is currently being experienced)

(5) The way police services are provided will change; Minnipa and Wirrulla will service the area.

An equivalent level of service provision will be provided.

An increased number of police officers will have familiarity with the area.

A dedication to the service needs of the area will be provided.

**Factor 2:** Loss of police officer permanently situated in the Poochera community

(1) Poochera Police Station is situated on the Eyre Highway, 47 kilometres east from Wirrulla and 35 kilometres west from Minnipa which have police stations on the Eyre Peninsula.

A police officer at the rank of Brevet Sergeant is the only staff member of the Poochera police station.

(2) **Positive:** - Change in the way the areas is serviced

**Negative:** - Loss of the shop front service

(3) The current staff member of the Poochera police station will be transferred to another police jurisdiction within the Eyre and Western LSA.

(4) Investment in resources from Minnipa and Wirrulla to servicing the needs of the Poochera community. (which is expected to be minimal as is currently being experienced)

(5) The way police services are provided will change; Minnipa and Wirrulla will service the area.

An equivalent level of service provision will be provided.

An increased number of police officers will have familiarity with the area.

A dedication to the service needs of the area will be provided.

**7.2 SOCIAL FACTORS:** *(For each factor describe, (1) current status, (2) implications for access to education, health, justice or community services by town or region, (3) and social groups advantaged and/or disadvantaged, and (4) affect on people's way of life.*

**Factor 1:** Access to justice services

(1) The Poochera police station, that has one staff member, is situated in the Poochera community. Residents from the Poochera community and surrounding district pastoral properties currently contact the Poochera police station (has been vacant since June 2009) to access police services. Services provided by Minnipa, Wirrulla and other police stations have been sourced as a back up capacity; some residents have indicated that they have been disappointed with service delivery issues of those stations owing to not meeting appointments or absences.

(2) It is proposed that Minnipa and Wirrulla police stations will provide a service to the Poochera community and surrounding district pastoral properties.

Public counter and patrol functions will be administered through the Minnipa police station.

In consideration that staff from the Minnipa and Wirrulla police station will be deployed to address the majority of the taskings in the Poochera region, more police officers will have a knowledge of the region than is currently being provided.

In addition, Highway Traffic policing responsibilities will be assumed by the Eyre and Western Highway Patrol.

(3) Local government, organisational and individual comments (the latter expressed from the Poochera residents who attended the Community Consultation) indicated that the services currently being provided is predominately successful, characteristics of the region (e.g. proposed mining ventures); the back up service provided by adjacent policing jurisdictions has

not been efficient; and that in the interest of maintaining community confidence the Poochera police officer should remain.

It is anticipated that if the proposed policing arrangements are implemented, these concerns may be alleviated, as the area will still be serviced by a police presence, albeit it is initiated from adjacent policing jurisdictions.

(4) From a South Australia Police perspective, the proposed change will affect the way police services are administered. However, the Poochera community will continue to be serviced by staff in the adjacent policing jurisdictions. As such, crime matters will continue to be addressed, albeit by adjacent policing jurisdictions.

**Factor 2: Level of criminal activity**

(1) The Poochera police station, that has one staff member, is situated in the Poochera community (vacant since June 2009). Residents from the Poochera community and surrounding district pastoral properties currently contact the Poochera police station to access police services.

(2) It is proposed that Minnipa and Wirrulla will provide a dedicated service (i.e. not back up service) to the Poochera Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties.

(3) Individual issues raised at the Community Consultation in Poochera indicated a concern that arranged appointments were not being met by neighbouring policing districts and difficulty in reaching the officers. It is anticipated that if the proposed policing arrangements are implemented, these concerns may be alleviated, as the policing district will be formalised and appointed to the adjacent policing areas.

(4) It is expected that the proposal will have an affect on people's way of life. But they will continue to be serviced by South Australia Police. The change will be the manner in which the service is devolved.

**Factor 3: Affect on Individual health and the local social service system**

(1) The Poochera police station, that has one staff member, is situated in the Poochera community. Residents from the Poochera community and surrounding district pastoral properties currently contact the Poochera police station to access police services.(vacant since June 2009)

(2) There were no individual concerns raised at the Community Consultation in Poochera on the impact on local social service systems.

(3) Individual concerns raised at this consultation indicated that they feared the potential affects that this proposal could have on the safety of the Poochera residents as there was no officer stationed in the town.

(4) From a South Australia Police perspective, all crime matters will continue to be addressed as they were in the past, albeit by adjacent policing jurisdictions. As such, it is anticipated that this will have minimal affect on the demand for the local social service system. (this has been experienced since the Poochera Police Station was vacated by the last incumbent)

**7.3 ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS:** *(for each factor describe (1) current status, (2) key environmental impacts, and (3) flow on effects)*

It is not anticipated that there will be any environmental implications that are related to the proposed change in service provision within the Poochera region.

**8. MITIGATION:** *(Detail steps taken or to be taken to mitigate any identified impacts in implementing the preferred option).*

It is proposed that:

- Existing staffing resources within the Minnipa and Wirrulla police station are to be utilised to provide a public counter and patrol functions. In order to enable this to be achieved, Minnipa and Wirrulla policing district will need to be expanded to incorporate the Poochera region. As is currently the case in all LSAs, each request for police attendance will be assessed as per normal priority allocation criteria.
- The Poochera township will be allocated to the Minnipa policing district. The Poochera policing district has six regions and the regions will be divided with the township being policed by Minnipa.
- Five police officers (three recent additional members) are dedicated to the Eyre Highway to work on highway traffic policing within the Eyre and Western LSA which will include the Poochera township.

In consideration that the Poochera region was previously serviced by one police officer, the above-proposed strategies will ensure that there will be a greater police knowledge of and presence within the area.

**9. COORDINATION:** *(Detail any inter-agency coordination or cooperation with other spheres of government).*

The consultation process has involved providing information and inviting submissions from key local organisations, internal and external government (i.e. federal, state and local) sources (refer section 4). The information used from all received submissions has been utilised in this report.

From an interagency perspective, a significant amount of consultation has taken place with police stations located within the Eyre Western LSA policing jurisdiction and the Business Information Section to determine both the existing and potential optimal use of policing resources within the Poochera region.

An implementation of the proposed strategy will not have significant impact to the current resources within the Eyre and Western LSA as the Poochera policing district has been policed utilising the neighbouring policing districts since June 2009.

**10. STRATEGIES CONSIDERED:** *(Provide a description of (1) strategies considered, (2) advantages and disadvantages that may be encountered in implanting them).*

**(1) Strategy 1: Retain the Poochera police station and allocated staff member at the rank of Brevet Sergeant.**

Strategy 2: Change the police method of service delivery by closing the Poochera police station and developing a new model of delivery with adjacent

policing jurisdictions; the new model involves the transferral of highway traffic policing responsibilities to Eyre and Western Highway Patrol and the public counter and patrol functions to Minnipa and Wirrulla police stations.

**(1) Strategy 1: Advantages:** - A high level of community satisfaction exists with the role being undertaken by the police officer working at the Poochera police station.

**Disadvantages:** - Considerations of Poochera police station workloads, demographic statistics, and alternate service options to the area indicate that the current service that is provided does not constitute an optimal use of South Australia Police resources.

- An investigation of strategies that could be shared with adjacent policing jurisdictions has indicated that utilisation of resources from the Eyre and Western LSA policing jurisdictions will result in a greater pool of police staff members who are able to be allocated to the area and a more efficient utilisation of resources.

**(1) Strategy 2: Advantages:** - There will be a police presence in the area.

- Crime issues within the Poochera area will be continued to be addressed.
- A greater level of efficiency in the utilisation of resources would be received.
- Resources to the area will be provided from the Minnipa and Wirrulla police stations.
- Minnipa will service the Poochera township.
- Police staff from both the neighbouring police jurisdictions will develop a greater working knowledge of the Poochera region.

**Disadvantages:** - The Poochera police station would close.

- The existing police member at Poochera police station would be deployed to another area albeit within the Eyre and Western LSA.
- The change may evoke fear in the community over the affect that it may have on personal safety, security, health and local crime levels. (although the station has been vacant since June 2009)

**11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT:** *(Detail if the preferred option has any resource or responsibility implications upon local government).*

The consultation process involved sending a letter to District Council of Streaky Bay inviting them to provide a written submission detailing any concerns, issues or comments regarding the proposal to change the method of service delivery within the Poochera community.

The District of Streaky Bay replied recognising the reasoning behind the submission however did not want any further rationalisation of police services within the council area.

**12. PREFERRED OPTION:** *(Outline the preferred option and describe how the consultative process affected the selection of the preferred option).*

The preferred option is:

**Strategy 2:** Change the police method of service delivery by closing the Poochera police station and developing a new model of service delivery with adjacent policing jurisdictions; the new model involves the transferral of highway traffic policing responsibilities to Eyre and Western Highway Patrol and the public counter and patrol functions to Minnipa and Wirrulla police stations.

The issues that arose during the consultative process were imperative to the consideration of the options outlined in Section 10. In general, whilst a number of the comments made were complimentary of the existing service that is being provided by the police staff member at the neighbouring police stations, concern was raised regarding the efficiency to provide a back up support to the region, the characteristics of the region that required a police presence, resulting crime levels and the fear of the impact of the change on individual safety, security and well being.

The preferred option (Strategy 2) that is proposed does not seek to remove the presence of South Australia Police within the area. Rather, it seeks to coordinate (and employ where necessary) staffing resources from adjacent jurisdictions to ensure that crime issues within the Poochera region area are appropriately addressed. Strategy 2 will be based on the utilisation of resources to the Poochera and adjacent areas. Services to the Poochera region will therefore be attended to on a "priority basis".

**The change advocated in Strategy 2 will ensure a provision of service delivery to the Area.**

### **13. SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES:**

Name: Senior Sergeant First Class Michael Walsh  
Posting: Port Lincoln Police Station, Eyre Western LSA  
Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2012.