



REGIONAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT STATEMENT

1. TITLE OF INITIATIVE / SUBMISSION:

Change in Police Service Delivery in the Iron Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties.

2. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE ISSUE TO BE ADDRESSED:

Iron Knob is located 68km west of Port Augusta and 52km northwest of Whyalla on the Eyre Peninsula. In 1894, the first iron ore deposit was discovered and the town of Iron Knob grew between the Iron Knob and Iron Monarch quarries. Mining rights were acquired for the region in 1897, and in 1901 the Broken Hill Proprietary Company, Ltd. (BHP), began developing the deposits of iron ore in Iron Knob hill. Additional mines were opened in following years in the Middleback Ranges to meet market demands. After almost 100 years, quarrying for iron at the town ceased in 1998.

In 2001, 250 people resided in the Iron Knob police station district. This figure includes collector districts in and around the police station district. In this year, the Australian Bureau of Statistics indicated that 213 people resided in the city area.

Considerations of Iron Knob, Whyalla and Port Augusta police station workloads, demographic statistics, and available options to service the area have been undertaken and the results have indicated that significant scope exists within the adjoining police jurisdictions to fully service the area.

The proposal under consideration is to close the Iron Knob police station, that is staffed by one staff member at the rank of Brevet Sergeant, and have the Iron Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties serviced by both the Whyalla and Port Augusta police stations. In particular, it is proposed that the Whyalla police station will provide public counter and patrol functions and that the highway traffic policing responsibilities will be assumed by Port Augusta police station.

The attention by staff in two neighbouring police jurisdictions will ensure that more police officers have both an in depth knowledge of the area and are available to attend to any incidents as they arise.

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

Mid West and Far North Local Service Area (LSA) policing jurisdictions. *Appendix A* includes a map highlighting Mid West and Far North LSA policing jurisdictions and the approximate boundary of the Iron Knob policing jurisdiction. In regard to the latter map, in instances where particular pastoral properties fall across the boundary, the entire property may/may not be serviced by Iron Knob police station. In instances where it is not covered by the Iron Knob police station, it will be covered by the neighbouring police jurisdiction.

4. STAKEHOLDERS AFFECTED BY THE ISSUE / INITIATIVE:

Internal

- Commissioner of Police;
- Assistant Commissioner Northern Operations Service (jurisdictional responsibilities incorporate Mid West and Far North LSAs);
- Iron Knob police station; and
- Errappa Blue Light Camp.

External Government and Industry

- Government
 - Federal Government;
 - Australia Post (government business enterprise)
 - State Government;
 - Spencer Regional Facilitation Group (consisting of representatives from Department of Administrative and Information Services, Department of Education and Children's Services, Department of Further Education, Employment, Science and Technology, Department of Environment and Heritage, Department of Human Services, South Australia Police, SA

- Ambulance Service, Primary Industries and Resources SA, Transport SA (Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure), Water Land and Biodiversity Conservation;
- Member for Giles, Ms Lyn Breuer MP;
- Transport SA (Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure);
- Tourism SA; (South Australian Tourism Commission)
- Families SA (Department for Families and Communities); and
- Country Fire Service.
- Local Government;
 - The City of Whyalla; and
 - District Council of Kimba.
- Industry;
 - One Steel;
 - BHP Billiton Olympic Dam; and
 - Cultanna Army Firing Range.

Local Organisations

- Outback Areas Community Development Trust; and
- Iron Knob Progress Association.

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

- Effective 29 August 2006, all external government and industry and local organisations and one internal stakeholder (i.e. Errappa Blue Light Camp) was 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 August 2006, 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 Iron Knob Police Station and have the Iron Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties serviced by both the Whyalla and Port Augusta police stations. In particular, it is proposed that the Whyalla police station will provide public counter and patrol functions and that the highway traffic policing responsibilities will be assumed by Port Augusta police station, in particular by an expanded Highway Patrol Section.

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 29 September 2006.

As of the 1 of November 2006, seven letters were received from across the following nominated internal, external government and industry and local organisations stakeholder groups.

- **Internal**
 - Errappa Blue Light Camp
- **External Government and Industry**
 - Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure (Transport Services Division – Northern and Western Region)
 - The City of Whyalla
 - District Council of Kimba
 - BHP Billiton Olympic Dam Corporation PTY Ltd.
- **Local Organisations**
 - Outback Areas Community Development Trust, Primary Industries and Resources SA
 - Iron Knob Progress Association (former representative of)

Whilst all responses were received in written format as requested, two responses were originally directed towards the Acting Commissioner of Police John White and the Hon Minister Paul Holloway.

In addition, the submission from The City of Whyalla featured information from the Iron Knob Progress Association from June 2006 and comments expressed by attendees of a Community Consultation that was held at the Iron Knob Community Centre on 8 September 2006.

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 expressed in the letters is listed below:

- No concerns or implications regarding the proposal;
- Standard of existing police service that is being run in the Iron Knob (the existing Police Officer is proactive, supports community cohesion, provides a back up service to other police jurisdictions, keeps an eye on residents' homes when they are away, and is highly visible in their conduction of their duties);
- Characteristics of the Iron Knob region that will necessitate the need for a police service (i.e. increased traffic movement, tourist visitation rates and the resources boom, existence of causal factors to commit crime [e.g. unemployment rate and limited educational opportunities]);

- Fear of potential Increase in crime issues (i.e. criminal behaviour, motorcycle gang activity, drug cultivation, drink driving, crime from adjacent policing jurisdictions);
- Capability of Port Augusta police station in the past (i.e. to provide a full dedication to the area, immediate/short response time to attend incidents, and appropriate attention to traffic and domestic violence related crime);
- Capability of Whyalla police station in the past (i.e. to provide a full dedication to the area, short response time to attend incidents, appropriate attention to traffic and domestic violence related crime, and adequate level of staffing resources);
- Potential affects on health (i.e. feeling of individual/home/business security and safety, decreased quality of life, anger, frustration, depression, fearfulness) that will place additional burden on local social service systems);
- Errappa Camp police staff, who are employed to run the camp, may be approached by members of the public;
- Potential affects on youth (i.e. Errappa camp attendees may be exposed to people reporting criminal activities; Youth could grow up with no respect for authority; Youth may commit crime in the absence of a police presence in the area); and
- The timing of the strategy (i.e. should not be conducted for a couple/few years).

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, Whyalla and Kimba have provided a supportive function, the service change that is proposed will provide a commitment to addressing crime in the region. As such, it is anticipated that the service level provided by both the Whyalla and Port Augusta Highway Patrol may increase.

It is anticipated that the proposed service change, once implemented, may alleviate concerns regarding the level of service provided and feeling of safety and security in the community.

Effective 5 January 2007, the Brevet Sergeant transferred from the Iron Knob police station to another position within the organisation. In consideration that the Iron Knob police station is currently not staffed, investigations were made with Whyalla and Port Augusta police stations in January regarding the degree to which their respective policing jurisdictions were receiving calls from Iron Knob residents to address policing issues. In addition, police incident statistics were investigated to determine the rate of offences that have occurred in the area since early January. Information obtained from Whyalla at Port Augusta police stations indicated that they had received five and nil calls respectively. The subsequent statistical enquiry of the occurrence of police incidents revealed that only one offence had occurred within this period.

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 Iron Knob community and surrounding pastoral properties**

- (1) Police Services are currently been carried out by the staff member at the Iron Knob police station.
Port Augusta Highway Patrol and Whyalla police stations provide a back up service when required.
- (2) *Positive:* - Staffing resources at Whyalla police station will address the majority of the taskings within the Iron Knob 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 Port Augusta police station.
- A greater number of Whyalla Police staff will develop a working knowledge of the Iron Knob region.
Negative: - The Port Augusta and Whyalla police station LSA budget will need to cover extra overtime and vehicle use.
- Costs associated with the closure and transfer of the staff member situated at Iron Knob police station.
- (3) The current staff member of the Iron Knob police station will need to be transferred to another police district.
- (4) Investment in resources from Port Augusta and Whyalla to servicing the needs of the Iron Knob community.
- (5) The way police services are provided will change; Port Augusta Highway Patrol and Whyalla Police station 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 Iron Knob community**

- (1) Iron Knob is located 68km west of Port Augusta and 52km northwest of Whyalla on the Eyre Peninsula
A police officer at the rank of Brevet Sergeant is the only staff member of the Iron Knob 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 Iron Knob police station will need to be transferred to another police jurisdiction.
- (4) Investment in resources from Port Augusta and Whyalla to servicing the needs of the Iron Knob community.
- (5) The way police services are provided will change; Port Augusta and Whyalla Police station 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) any social groups advantaged and/or disadvantaged; and (4) affect on people's way of life).

Factor 1: **Access to justice services**

- (1) The Iron Knob police station, that has one staff member, is situated in the Iron Knob community. Residents from the Iron Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties currently contact the Iron Knob police station to access police services. Services provided by Whyalla police station have been sourced as a back up capacity; some residents have indicated that they have been disappointed with response time of Whyalla station, as it is located 52km away when utilised in "back up" situations.

- (2) It is proposed that Port Augusta Highway Patrol and Whyalla police stations will provide a service to the Iron Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties. Public counter and patrol functions will be administered through the Whyalla police station. In consideration that staff from the Whyalla police station will be deployed to address the majority of the taskings in the Iron Knob region, more police officers will have a knowledge of the region than that that is currently being provided. In addition, highway traffic policing responsibilities will be assumed by the Port Augusta Highway Patrol.
- (3) Local government, organisational and individual comments (the latter expressed from the Iron Knob residents who attended the Community Consultation administered by The City of Whyalla) indicated that the services currently being provided is successful, characteristics of the region (e.g. increased traffic movement, tourist visitation rates and the resources boom); timing of the strategy was too soon; the back up service provided by adjacent policing jurisdictions was not timely enough; and that in the interest of maintaining community confidence, policing services need to be highly visible. 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 Iron Knob 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 Iron Knob police station, that has one staff member, is situated in the Iron Knob community. Residents from the Iron Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties currently contact the Iron Knob police station to access police services.
- (2) It is proposed that Port Augusta Highway Patrol and Whyalla police station will provide a dedicated service (i.e. not back up service) to the Iron Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties.
- (3) Individual concerns raised at the Community Consultation in Iron Knob indicated a fear that criminal activity would increase. In particular, concerns were raised regarding an increase in opportunistic crime, motorcycle gang activity, drug-related crime, youth crime and an inheritance of crime from adjacent jurisdictions. 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 to be initiated from adjacent policing jurisdictions.
- (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 Iron Knob police station, that has one staff member, is situated in the Iron Knob community. Residents from the Iron Knob community and surrounding district pastoral properties currently contact the Iron Knob police station to access police services.
- (2) Individual concerns raised at the Community Consultation in Iron Knob indicated a fear that the proposed closure would place additional burden 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 health of the resident population. They indicated that residents would feel unsafe, insecure, fearful, frustrated and depressed.
- (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.

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 Iron Knob 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 Whyalla police station are to be utilised to provide a 24 hour public counter and patrol functions. In order to enable this to be achieved, Whyalla Police district will need to be expanded to incorporate the Iron knob region. As is currently the case in all LSAs, each request for police attendance will be assessed as per normal priority allocation criteria.
- Five police officers (three additional and two existing staff members at the rank of Sergeant /Senior Constable or Constable) are to be dedicated to the Port Augusta police station to work on highway traffic policing within the Far North LSA and adjoining LSAs (i.e. the Iron Knob region).

In consideration that the Iron Knob 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, industries, 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 Mid West and Far North LSA policing jurisdictions and the Business Information Section to determine both the existing and potential optimal use of policing resources within the Iron Knob region.

An implementation of the proposed strategy will require a high degree of coordination of resources within the Mid West and Far North LSA policing districts.

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

- (1) Strategy 1: Retain the Iron Knob police station and allocated staff member at the rank of Brevet Sergeant.
- Strategy 2: Change the police method of service delivery by closing the Iron Knob 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 Port Augusta Highway Patrol and the public counter and patrol functions to Whyalla police station.
- (1) Strategy 1: *Advantages:* - A high level of community satisfaction exists with the role being undertaken by the police officer working at the Iron Knob police station.
- Disadvantages:* - Considerations of Iron Knob 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 Mid West and Far North 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 Iron Knob 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 Whyalla and Port Augusta police stations.
 - Three additional police staff members at the rank of Senior Constable or Constable will be employed at the Port Augusta police station to address highway traffic policing within the Far North LSA and adjoining LSAs (i.e. the Iron Knob region).
 - Whyalla police station will provide a 24hr service to the Iron Knob region.
 - Police staff from both the Whyalla and Port Augusta police jurisdictions will develop a greater working knowledge of the Iron Knob region.

- Disadvantages:*
- The Iron Knob police station would close.
 - The existing police member at Iron Knob police station would be deployed to another area.
 - The change may evoke fear in the community over the affect that it may have on personal safety, security, health and local crime levels.

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 The City of Whyalla and the District Council of Kimba 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 Iron Knob community. The former raised issues conveyed by the Iron Knob Progress Association and attendees of a Community Consultation session held in the Iron Knob Community Centre. The submission detailed concerns regarding police response times, fear of an increase in crime, fear of deterioration in the level of personal health, safety and security.

The latter raised the issue of the reliability of Port Augusta police station to supply a back up service in the Kimba region.

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 Iron Knob 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 Port Augusta police station and the public counter and patrol functions to Whyalla police station.

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 Iron Knob police station, concern was raised regarding the capacity of adjacent jurisdictions 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, health 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 Iron Knob region area are appropriately addressed. Strategy 2 will be based on the utilisation of resources to the Iron Knob and adjacent areas. Services to the Iron Knob region will therefore be attended to on a "priority basis".

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

13. SOUTH AUSTRALIA POLICE CONTACT FOR ENQUIRIES:

Name: Senior Sergeant Michael Everlyn
Posting: Southern Operational Service Tactical Team
Date: 28 / 5 / 2007

Form: 30/08/2006