APPENDIX A

Regional Impact Statement
REGIONAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Department: DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT, ENERGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Title: Duplication of the Sturt Highway between Gawler and Nuriootpa

2. Issue:
The Sturt Highway is the major transport connection between metropolitan Adelaide and local, interstate and international markets for product from the Barossa Valley and Riverland Regions.

A Corridor Study of the Highway in 2002 identified the Gawler to Nuriootpa section as not meeting desirable safety and vehicle capacity performance standards. A range of treatment options were assessed. Duplication of the highway is considered the only alternative capable of ensuring that desirable safety outcomes and State and AusLink National Network performance objectives are met.

A Memorandum of Understanding for the duplication of the Sturt Highway from Gawler to Nuriootpa was signed on 23 June 2006 by the Commonwealth and State Governments. The first package of works includes duplication of the road from Gawler Bypass to Argent Road, Gawler Belt. A second package of works to be completed by 31 December 2009 includes:

- Duplication of the road between Argent Road, Gawler Belt and Seppeltsfield Road, Nuriootpa
- Extension of acceleration and deceleration lanes and access improvements at the two Greenock interchanges at Seppeltsfield and Greenock Roads
- Improvement of Belvidere and Murray Road junctions
- Extension of the acceleration lane for west bound traffic at Old Kapunda Road
- Removal or protection of road side hazards from Seppeltsfield Road to Murray Road
- Pavement strengthening of the existing road where required between Argent Road and Nuriootpa.

Australian Government funding of $126 million has been provided for this project.

3. Regions:
The regions most affected by the project are the northern part of the Inner Region (Barossa Valley) and the Riverland Region. Refer to map attached in Appendix A.

4. Stakeholders:
Broad consultation formed part of the Corridor Study undertaken in 2002 and involved SAPOL, Council officers, local wine industry, South Australian Road Transport Association (SARTA), RAA and local councils (Light, Barossa, Regional, Mid Murray, Loxton Waikerie, Barmera Berri, Renmark Paringa). The Councils also participated in a workshop held in July 2005.
A broader consultation strategy is being implemented for the project with the aim of:
- promoting the project in terms of improved safety and efficiency
- informing the local community about the project including any possible impacts on them.

5. Consulted
Groups and organisations to be consulted include:
- State Members of Parliament - Tony Piccolo (Member for Light) and Ivan Venning (Member for Schubert)
- Federal Member of Parliament – David Fawcett (Member for Wakefield)
- Light Regional Council (this council covers the majority of the upgrade area)
- Town of Gawler
- Barossa Council
- Barossa Light Development Inc (Regional Development Board)
- Individual property owners
- Barossa Region Road Safety Committee
- Gawler Road Safety Group
- People for Public Transport
- RAA
- SARTA
- Emergency services (Fire, Ambulance, SAPOL)
- Barossa Valley Coachlines
- Premier Stateliner Coach Group
- Service authorities
- The Advertiser
- The Bunyip (Gawler)
- The Leader (Nuriootpa)
- Barossa & Light Herald
- The Stock Journal
- The Riverland Development Corporation (Regional Development Board).

6. Consultation
Consultation will be undertaken in two phases. Phase one will advise the local community, including councils, residents, traders, businesses and local schools of the project, will provide them with an opportunity to raise issues and will enable the project team to gather information. Phase two will involve the same groups of stakeholders in more detailed discussion of the design of the proposed route. Each phase will involve a mix of letters, meetings and briefings and more general advertisements in local papers. Phase two will also include two information sessions for the broader community.

7. Project Background
The duplication of the Sturt Highway will extend from the town of Nuriootpa at the northern end of the Barossa Valley to the Gawler Bypass, at the northern edge of metropolitan Adelaide, approximately 28 km in length. The duplication will enhance accessibility to and from these important regional areas to metropolitan Adelaide and on to export markets.

The Sturt Highway carries a mix of freight, commuter, tourist and local traffic and is currently an undivided two lane rural highway with:
poor reliability of travel time caused by the clustering of slow moving large freight vehicles, including over dimensional vehicles
• a high proportion of ‘head on’ road crashes, resulting in a high proportion of serious or fatal injury
• a disproportionate number of road crashes on sections of the road rather than road junctions.

8. Summary of Impacts and Analysis
The impact of the Sturt Highway duplication on regional areas will be largely positive due to improved freight efficiency; reduced travel times to export markets by freight and by residents to service centres; and improved safety for all road users.

The regions are likely to encounter minor negative impacts during the project’s construction, particularly road users entering and exiting the Barossa Valley region.

8.1. Economic Factors

Freight Access
Significant volumes of the State’s wine grapes are processed in Barossa Valley. Wine grapes from all regions are transported to the Barossa Valley’s major wine production and storage facilities. The Riverland region is home to substantial national horticulture and viticulture export industries. Other commodities such as grains, livestock and minerals are also transported along the Sturt Highway corridor. The Sturt Highway provides the most direct and efficient access for the agriculture, horticulture, viticulture and wine industries to and from local, interstate and international markets and to and from suppliers.

The regions also contain a number of smaller complimentary manufacturing, food processing, quarrying and engineering activities. Concentrations of these industries exist in and around all major Riverland Towns and at Nuriootpa, Shea-Oak Log and close to metro Adelaide at the Gawler Belt. Improved freight access may lead to increased demand for land in these locations to accommodate new manufacturing activities.

Freight movements already comprise a significant component of the traffic volumes along the Sturt Highway corridor (15-25%) and volumes are expected to increase. The project will lead to improved freight access for the Barossa Valley and the Riverland regions in support of new and existing businesses.

Tourism
The Barossa Valley is the most visited tourist region outside metropolitan Adelaide. The Riverland region is home to a number of significant tourism attractions including Banrock Station Wine and Wetland Centre, Bookmark Biosphere and the River Murray. Both regions have strong reputations for quality wine and food. The Sturt Highway is a major tourist gateway for both regions. Growing tourism activity in the regions and the consequent increase in traffic volumes have led to an increasing mix of heavy freight and tourism traffic which has led to safety concerns. Duplication of the road corridor will address these safety concerns.
8.2. Social Factors

Barossa Valley
The Barossa Valley region supports a population of approximately 32,000 people. The region’s towns are experiencing population growth due to their proximity to metropolitan Adelaide, attractiveness and character. Proximity to metropolitan Adelaide and constraints on the expansion of towns in the region has also led to considerable commuter traffic accessing employment in the region, particularly from suburbs within northern metropolitan Adelaide. Duplication of the road corridor will improve access by commuters to their workplace from their place of residence.

The small communities of Shea-Oak Log, Greenock and Daveyston are situated along or near the Sturt Highway corridor. Major shopping, education, health and community services for the region are located at Nuriootpa, Tanunda and Gawler. The Sturt Highway is used by local residents of the small communities to access the larger service centres. The project will not lead to a change in local access to major services located in Nuriootpa, Tanunda and Gawler.

The town of Gawler is home to two large independent schools, Trinity and Xavier College. Both schools draw students from the Barossa Valley region. While long term access to the schools from the Barossa will be improved, delays may be encountered by students using the Sturt Highway to access the schools during construction of the road corridor.

Riverland
Riverland region supports a population of approximately 35,000 people. The population of the Riverland is expected to decline as the population ages and young people migrate to larger urban centres. The Sturt Highway is the main access to Adelaide from Riverland towns, and is a popular gateway in and out of South Australia for the eastern states. The Riverland’s various town centres are between two and three hours driving time from metropolitan Adelaide. The project will lead to improved access to towns within the Riverland region.

8.3. Environmental Factors
There are no major positive or negative regional environmental impacts from duplication of the road corridor. The environmental issues are considered to be localised and include:

- a potential increase in traffic noise as a result of relocation of the road corridor closer to the Daveyston community
- the potential loss of small areas of native vegetation adjoining the road corridor
- the spread of proclaimed and environmental weeds.

A detailed sustainability management plan has been prepared for the project which outlines how these issues will be addressed.

9. Solutions
The negative impacts and the potential criticism of the project will be mitigated by a consultation strategy that:

- promotes the project in terms of improved safety and efficiency
• informs the local community about the project and works with them to identify and resolve any possible impacts on them.

10. Coordination
The Australian Government is funding the duplication of the Sturt Highway, between Gawler and Nuriootpa. Federal funding of $126 million has been provided for this project through AusLink. The State Government’s Department for Transport, Energy and Infrastructure is managing this upgrade on behalf of the Australian Government.

Local Government has been made aware of the broader benefits and inherent linkages in this project and will continue to be involved in discussion and resolution of community impacts and issues.

11. Preferred Option
A range of treatment options have been considered including:
• Additional overtaking lanes
• Three lane road with median barrier
• Duplication.

Duplication of the Sturt Highway is considered the only alternative capable of ensuring that desirable safety outcomes and State and AusLink National Network performance objectives are met.

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