

4 Response to issues raised in formal public submissions following release of the Environmental Report

4.1 Introduction

Public submissions on the Environmental Report were invited between 15 March 2007 and 26 April 2007. This provided interested persons and organisations with a formal opportunity to comment on any issue raised in the Environmental Report.

This section addresses the relevant matters raised in formal written submissions that were received by DTEI during that formal consultation period. The submissions received have been summarised and cross-referenced both to the relevant sections of the Environmental Report and to the responses provided in this Supplement Report.

In addition to formal written submissions (following release of the Environmental Report), a range of community engagement and consultation activities were held up to early May 2007.

4.2 Summary of issues

The formal period for comment on the Environmental Report was between Thursday March 15 2007 and Thursday 19 April 2007. This period for comment was extended by one week to Thursday 26 April 2007.

Of the fifty-nine submissions received, five were from local government, thirteen from state government, three from representative bodies and thirty-eight from the general public. These have been recorded by DTEI and are summarised in Appendix A.

Following is a summary of the key issues and responses raised in submissions. Headings reflect the structure of the Environmental Report. Where the reporting of additional investigations in Section 3 has already addressed an issue, the response is not repeated in this section.

4.2.1 Assessment process and stakeholder and community engagement

Concerns raised in submissions included the extent of consultation undertaken, the involvement of stakeholders in the route selection processes, the time to comment on the Environmental Report, the level of influence of consultation on the outcomes of the proposal, and how communities will know what is happening during the construction of the Expressway and Port Wakefield Road Upgrade.

A comprehensive communication and consultation strategy was prepared and is detailed in the *Community Engagement Technical Paper*. DTEI has made an extensive effort to provide information and receive input on all aspects of the proposal even those which were, from the outset, less likely to be changed. Concerns raised have been considered and, where appropriate, changes have been made throughout the proposal as a result of consultation.

The Community Engagement Phase 1 (pre-October 2006) included liaison with key stakeholders, government agencies, the affected councils, funding agencies, and representative bodies. This phase informed key stakeholders about the process and sought information about the issues to inform the analysis of the area and route options. The selection of the proposed route for the environmental

assessment process used targeted stakeholder consultation to assist with the identification of the issues to be considered.

Phase 2 (post-October 2006) used a Community Involvement Plan incorporating a range of consultation and communication options to provide information, provide the opportunity to participate in consultative processes and to make comment on the project. The input was used with specialist technical assessments and summarised in the Environmental Report.

Six weeks were provided to formulate and lodge written submissions on the Environmental Report. Assistance was given, to those preparing submissions, at the key consultation activities during the period. Whilst participants questioned the response time, six weeks is consistent with the consultation period for Major Developments and Projects under the *Development Act 1993*.

Care was taken in the communication with property owners, recognising the difficulty of emotional stress and the effects on individuals and families, and other complex business and property issues to be encountered. Some certainty about the route to be adopted was the preferred approach to minimise the number of affected property owners who would be subject to the property acquisition processes. Counselling services have been made available at no cost to assist people during the process if the process itself was distressing.

The majority of people who are impacted by acquisition have been able to accept the inevitable, have seen positive opportunities, and are in the acquisition process of, or have already purchased satisfactory alternative properties. As can be expected in major infrastructure projects requiring acquisition, some affected property owners, and some property owners who live near the corridor have, at times, expressed high levels of anger, frustration, distrust and annoyance.

Although counselling was made available, it was sometimes seen as an insufficient response to this stressful time for families affected by the project. Some owners have found it difficult to accept the project, to understand their position and move into the acquisition phase. There has also been questioning about compensation for the social dislocation and quality of life effects for those people suffering through the process. Other stakeholders feel they have not been adequately listened to by the project team, and even if they were heard, doubt that any changes can be made. Concern has also been expressed that compensation would not be adequate to replace the particular facilities or enhancements that make their properties special.

In the next phases of detailed design, construction, and operation and maintenance of the project, a variety of approaches will be adopted to communicate with affected communities and in the detailed design of some matters of local detail, for example, designing the service road at Globe Derby Park to take into account the horse training activities in the locality.

As well as a comprehensive communication strategy providing information to communities about disruptions before and during construction activities, ongoing negotiation and discussion with affected property owners will be a key initiative of the next steps in the project's implementation. Through the development and implementation of a Local Industry Participation Plan and other community involvement strategies, benefits for the communities adjacent to the Northern Expressway will be sought. Collaboration with local education providers and employment agencies will aim to develop appropriate skills required to match the project's needs.

4.2.2 Need for the proposal and alternatives

During consultation following the release of the Environmental Report, comments raised stated that the need for and selection of the proposed route as the best route had not been shown.

As stated during the consultation process and explained in this Supplement Report (Section 3.2) it has been shown that:

- Routes located west of Angle Vale (for example the Red route) will carry much less traffic, compared to the proposed route and consequently will result in a negative economic return – negative net present value and a benefit cost ratio less than unity. Therefore, these routes would not meet the fundamental AusLink and government objectives for the project and are not acceptable.
- Of the initial routes that were assessed, the White route represented the preferred route in terms of overall effects and economic benefits.
- The White route was subsequently developed into the proposed (Yellow) route to optimise benefits and opportunities and minimise effects, and with the subsequent amendments to the alignment described in this Supplement Report clearly now reflects the best route alignment. For example, the proposed route has the least number of properties to be acquired.
- The proposed route will have substantial secondary economic benefits including but not limited to:
 - jobs and supporting activities over the course of its construction
 - improved access for expanding industries and better services to businesses due to more efficient transport
 - enhancement of nearby industrial and residential property values
 - possible creation of significant industrial and residential land development opportunities
 - preservation of the long-term potential of the Virginia Triangle horticultural region
 - increased employment and creation of employment opportunities for the region's unemployed
 - boosted retail/commercial sector.
- Routes located west of Angle Vale have the greatest potential effect on horticultural land/loss.

4.2.3 Description/scope of the proposal

The proposed Northern Expressway Project and the Port Wakefield Road Upgrade as outlined in the Environmental Report has been changed to reflect community and other stakeholder comments and concerns where these were feasible. These include:

- Northern Expressway
 - Moving the route nearer to Macdonald Park to minimise the effect of property acquisition.
 - Moving the route in two other places to minimise land acquisition effects.
 - Providing additional interchanges and ramps at Two Wells Road, Angle Vale Road and Curtis Road to improve accessibility of the Northern Expressway to the local community and businesses, as well as for emergency services.

- The design basis for the bridge (Gawler River) will remain at flood immunity for a 1:100 year ARI event as previously indicated without causing further adverse effects either upstream and/or downstream of the proposed bridge crossing. It is expected that additional structures/culverts will be provided under the Northern Expressway for the extent of the flood plain on the southern side of the Gawler River.
- Upgrade of Port Wakefield Road
 - Changes to intersections to facilitate safe and convenient movement through:
 - allowing right-turn access from Port Wakefield Road south into Burton Road
 - upgrading the roundabout at the intersection of Ryans Road and Martins Road
 - controlling the left turn from Globe Derby Drive at the signalised junction with Port Wakefield Road.
 - Other improvements:
 - management of pedestrians crossing Port Wakefield Road and truck parking at the Caltex Service Station at Bolivar
 - upgrade of Trotters Drive and the service road between Daniel Avenue and Whites Road drain – the specific nature of this work to be resolved in consultation with the City of Salisbury and the local community.

4.2.4 Social and demographic profile

The concerns raised included:

- the loss of community facilities, i.e. the trotting club and effects on the gliding club
- emergency services access
- access for horses along roads at Globe Derby Park
- east–west accessibility and movement for residents of Angle Vale, Virginia and Macdonald Park including pedestrian and bicycle movement
- possible effects on St Columba College
- effects on privacy and safety for the community.

In addition, the provision of public transport was raised for areas both near the Expressway and Port Wakefield Road. Several questions were raised about the statistics used to describe the community and suburbs in the study area and their relevance in describing the social effects of the proposal.

DTEI has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of a wide range of criteria including minimising the effects on residents and the community at large. Additional ramps proposed at Angle Vale Road, Curtis Road and Two Wells Road will improve the cross-Expressway movement options for communities either side of the corridor. Road design details including kerbing and channelling determined in consultation with the council and the community can address many concerns of the Globe Derby Park residents. Some specific off-road paths may be provided at Globe Derby Park adjacent to the service road but these are not generally part of the project proposal. The provision of public transport services is a matter for the Public Transport Division of DTEI and not part of this proposal.

The demographic profile in the Environmental Report and the *Social and Demographic Profile Technical Paper* provides a context for both the readers and the researchers – a general overview of the characteristics of the area in the form of a snapshot derived from the ABS 2001 Census. It serves to illustrate the range and variation of factors including age, settlement, occupation and income, and an understanding of the diversity of backgrounds and circumstances of communities in that area. This contextual information, whilst important in its own right, did not dictate the route selection process. The social and demographic profile data provided the project team with information to assist with the development of community engagement activities and materials. For example, fact sheets and brochures were translated into Vietnamese and Khmer to enable better understanding of the project by the large Vietnamese and Cambodian communities in the region. Interpreters were also available at Open Days and shopping centre displays.

4.2.5 Land use and zoning

A number of submissions raised issues relating to the potential land use and zoning flow-on effects as a result of the Northern Expressway. Particular issues related to:

- the effect on horticultural land including the potential loss of production in the area
- the potential to encourage residential and commercial development resulting in changes in zoning and the Urban Boundary over the short to long-term
- the need to integrate land use and transport infrastructure – this was balanced by one submission indicating that the Expressway will bind together and support economic initiatives in the region
- the effect on commercial activities of properties resulting from the upgrade of Port Wakefield Road.

The Northern Expressway alignment will result in the direct loss of some horticultural land as a result of acquisition for the actual road corridor. The net loss of horticultural land is minor; however, the main concern relates to the potential indirect effects including a change in zoning between the Expressway and the Urban Boundary as a result of the severance of horticultural activities and improved accessibility to urban infrastructure. Whilst experience worldwide indicates that the effect of a freeway standard road does generate change, this change can only occur with government intervention by way of amending the Urban Boundary. There is clear tension between the desire to retain productive horticultural land (current policy) and local government and landowner initiatives for non-horticultural related development. The Northern Expressway Project properly focuses on the transport corridor issue and encourages local government and landowners to work with the relevant government agencies to maintain the status quo (current policy) where appropriate.

Commercial activities adjacent to Port Wakefield Road have been carefully considered given the interim nature of the proposed road upgrade. Where feasible, access is provided by way of service roads. In general, the upgrades seek to improve safety by managing a number of turning movements, providing U-turn locations and improving capacity at key junctions. A future planning study will determine measures that may be required post-2016.

Discussions are occurring regarding the provision of further planning controls in existing zones over new houses and other sensitive 'receptors' in close proximity to the proposed Expressway. This would provide a precautionary approach should individual owners wish to build or relocate dwellings in the future on their existing land titles in proximity to the proposed Expressway. This will ensure that dwellings are designed to achieve the desired noise criteria for any particular location.

Land use zoning will become more important with the growth in demand for residential and industrial land. The Metropolitan Planning Strategy outlines a metropolitan Urban Boundary that contains Adelaide's urban sprawl and encourages higher density residential development and redevelopment closer to the city's centre and major transport and service nodes. The Northern Expressway is likely to facilitate development in the region generally; however, the Metropolitan Planning Strategy does not support urban land uses between the Urban Boundary and the Northern Expressway.

4.2.6 Property

A number of issues were generated by the need for and processes of purchasing the land for the Expressway corridor and the proposed upgrade works on Port Wakefield Road. The process of advising residents of compulsory acquisition orders was of concern and the legal ability to be able to 'take people's homes' was criticised. Also raised was the need to provide timely processes of acquisition and land swaps to minimise the disruption to business, especially horticulture.

Compulsory land purchase for public infrastructure has direct effect on families and businesses whose properties are acquired. There is a need to provide the greatest level of certainty, to avoid alarming individuals and property owners unnecessarily, and to negotiate acquisition rather than using compulsory acquisition powers. The project has endeavoured to affect as few properties (and families) as possible. It is acknowledged that some people have found the process of property acquisition and relocation difficult. Property owners requiring support have been offered and provided counselling. Anyone requiring additional support will be referred to appropriate agencies and is being encouraged to contact the Northern Expressway Information Line (1300 658 621).

4.2.7 Transport

A number of submissions and some consultation feedback indicated concerns with respect to:

- the lack of access to the Expressway for the community and businesses because of insufficient interchanges
- response times for emergency services
- inconvenience and the need to travel further distance because of road closures
- the amount of traffic on local roads and the need for some improvement of these roads
- traffic conditions along Port Wakefield Road and the need for further improvement.

In response to these issues, this Supplement Report describes that:

- the project is to include additional interchanges and ramps at Two Wells Road, Angle Vale Road and Curtis Road (refer Section 3.2)
- there has been ongoing consultation with the emergency services, and in agreement with them, it is proposed that, in addition to all the interchanges, additional access to the Expressway will be provided for emergency services vehicles with at least one intermediate point between each interchange via a closed road special access gate
- it is acknowledged that with closure of some local roads, for example Petheron Road and Penfield Road, some people will be inconvenienced and will need to make a longer trip for some purposes

compared to the existing situation. However, this is mostly expected to be no more than 2 kilometres and often as low as a few hundred metres

- on some local roads traffic will increase. This can be owing to natural population and traffic growth, proposed/likely new developments and traffic accessing the Expressway. On some local roads, traffic will decrease because of the Expressway. Some of these issues will be the responsibility of the relevant council. In some cases, DTEI will make local improvements. Further consultation with councils is expected on these matters
- the upgrade of Port Wakefield Road will be sufficient for the forecast traffic conditions expected up to 2016. A further planning study will be carried out to determine the requirements beyond 2016.

4.2.8 Flora

Submissions were concerned with:

- the landscaping of the Expressway corridor
- the accuracy of the vegetation lists
- the need to minimise vegetation clearance
- using revegetation to build on local ecological communities
- ongoing management.

The importance of seed collection, offset plantings and saving 'hollows' (in trees and logs) was also emphasised. Gawler, as a transition between ecological communities in the plains and foothills, was highlighted, as was the area of woodland at the southern end of Kentish Road and the corridor of the Gawler River.

The submissions emphasised the desire to use indigenous species for planting, particularly local indigenous species. Weed control was recognised as important. There were differences of opinion about the location and use of plantings of native grasses, and plantings of taller species providing screening or feature plantings highlighting changing traffic conditions near interchanges and at each end of the Northern Expressway.

Some native vegetation will be affected. Clearance of vegetation will be minimised, removal of significant trees avoided where possible, hollows left or relocated and offset plantings undertaken. A Vegetation Management Plan will be prepared to offset the removal of native vegetation and provide a significant environmental benefit. DTEI will, during the detailed design phase, identify various species' mixes for differing landscape situations, for example, swales, embankments, batter slopes, gateways and screening. Hundreds of thousands of indigenous plants will be planted within the Expressway corridor in one of the largest revegetation programs to take place in the Northern Adelaide Plains. A limited number of large 'nursery grown' feature trees are proposed as contrasting design features to the indigenous plantings used over most of the corridor. Information and species lists provided by the Gawler Environment and Heritage Association will assist in establishing the species list for revegetation and landscaping along the Northern Expressway. The species list for revegetation and feature planting is not yet finalised and suggestions for other suitable species will be considered.

DTEI will be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the Northern Expressway road reserve corridor upon completion of the construction contract. Works in the vicinity of the crossing of the Gawler River will

incorporate appropriate revegetation and embankment stabilisation and address the weed problems in the immediate area, but not the ongoing weed problems along other areas of the river corridor. Some river red gums will be removed. Surveys will continue to be undertaken to assess seasonal variation in the vegetation and allow seed collection. Seed has been and will continue to be collected along the corridor for revegetation works within the corridor. Use of alternative non-potable water supplies will be investigated to maintain landscape plantings.

4.2.9 Noise

A number of submissions raised the issue of increasing noise pollution (particularly given the existing quiet rural environment) and what will be done to minimise noise effects.

Section 14 of the Environmental Report outlines the approach to managing road traffic noise for the Northern Expressway.

The Northern Expressway study area is generally characterised by very quiet background noise levels, due to its predominantly rural setting.

It is acknowledged that the Northern Expressway will alter the noise environment within the study area. There will be increased traffic noise exposure adjacent to the Expressway and a reduction in noise along parts of the existing network such as Angle Vale Road, Heaslip Road and Main North Road.

The nature of noise treatments adjacent to the Northern Expressway will be determined during detailed design and will depend on the amount of noise reduction that is required to achieve the noise criteria.

Individual noise treatment packages will be designed for each dwelling that does not meet the specific target noise criteria. The level of treatment will depend on the amount of noise reduction that is required to achieve the noise criteria. An acoustic engineer will be engaged to develop the specific noise treatment measures during the detailed design phase of the project.

4.2.10 Air quality

The issue of increasing pollution from the Expressway and its health effect was also raised in a number of submissions.

Part D, Section 21 of the Environmental Report outlines the air quality assessment. The air quality objectives for the assessment adopted the NEPM limits which are designed to protect public health, and has taken diesel emissions into account in defining the PM10 and PM2.5 limits for particulates. The air quality model predictions for the Northern Expressway have determined that the air quality concentrations will not exceed any of the NEPM limits at the nearest sensitive receptor in 2011 and 2021.