



### **Road strikes again – fatal accident 19 October 2007**

Reports of yet another accident – this time fatal - on the Wirrulla-Kingoonya road highlight the necessity for the road to be upgraded to an all-weather standard ready for sealing, Member for Flinders Liz Penfold said.

“The poor standard of the road is a trap for the inexperienced, most of whom are tourists (often from overseas) and city people unfamiliar with outback South Australia,” she said.

Mrs Penfold said the region is also seeing an increase in heavy traffic because of the mining projects and exploration in the remote north-west of South Australia.

“Upgrading this track to an all-weather road will benefit the state through increased revenue from mining and tourism, and provide much needed jobs for local people.

“The Streaky Bay District Council and the Outback Areas Trust are ready, willing and able to do the job which has been costed at \$15 million. \$5 million a year over three years, starting with the worst parts first, is not too much to ask.”

“It is essential for the safety of everyone who uses this connecting link with outback areas that the road be upgraded as quickly as possible,” she said.

Mrs Penfold said a nearby station manager often spent as much time rescuing travellers and doing emergency repairs to vehicles as he did on his ordinary work.

“More deaths would have occurred but for the timely intervention and sacrifice of this man and many others.

“I particularly commend the volunteer CFS and ambulance workers who have to leave their employment and travel hundreds of kilometres over shocking roads to attend accidents and fires in this vast outback area. On this most recent occasion, travelling hundreds of kilometres from Streaky Bay north out of the council area and than back and up to Ceduna Hospital.

“With a hot summer forecast when above century heat is common, the outlook for survival is grim for those unfortunate enough to head down on this road, especially if their water supplies are limited,” she said. ENDS

### **MOVE FOR MINING ACCESS ROAD May 22 2007**

Member for Flinders has requested the Minister for Transport, Mr Pat Conlon, to consider the construction of a new all weather road linking Eyre Highway to the Stuart highway and mines to the north of Ceduna.

“The road will also provide a better link for tourists and locals while bringing a measure of safety for those

travelling in these isolated regions of the state," she said.

Mrs Penfold said the mining boom in Western Australia is benefiting South Australia with heavy equipment being transferred to mines in the North of the State.

"However there is a great need to provide a more direct link for equipment coming from the west. I have been lobbied by a number of mining companies that currently have to detour hundreds of additional kilometres through Port Augusta at a huge cost.

"I have also received a copy of a petition with over 300 signatures asking for the road to be upgraded to provide access to Coober Pedy, Alice Springs and the Northern Territory.

"I've been lobbied directly by station owners who have to pick up the pieces after accidents and breakdowns on the existing road from Wirrulla often at considerable cost in time and personal expense," she said.

Mrs Penfold said rollovers and accidents (one in which a man with head injuries had to be taken to a site from where he could be airlifted to hospital) were common. Mobile phones are useless.

An experienced truck driver who frequently passes along the track said his most recent drive from Kingoonya to Streaky Bay left him "physically exhausted" with corrugations so bad that it "literally shook my Engel fridge to pieces".

A woman whose work takes her along outback dirt roads said the bullbar on her two-year-old four-wheel-drive sheared off on one of the mounting brackets, and the other bracket was so badly cracked that the bulbar was in imminent danger of falling off.

The mechanic who repaired the vehicle told her he has had many vehicles in for repair from damage sustained when travelling the Wirrulla-Kingoonya road.

Mrs Penfold said she recently travelled along Googs Track from Ceduna to the east-west railway line, along to Kingoonya and then down to Wirrulla to see for herself what could be done.

"I decided that neither road would be cost effective to upgrade for safe all weather use, an opinion that has been upheld by those with experience in road building.

"After consulting with others, it is apparent that the land west of Lake Everard is potentially less likely to be badly affected by rain than the lower land between the lakes where the road currently goes.

"I have asked the Minister to investigate the possibility of a new road along a new route as a long term all weather access solution," she said. ENDS