

Primary Producers SA

Submission to

The 20 Year State Infrastructure Strategy Discussion Paper

Primary Producers SA (PPSA) welcomes the establishment of Infrastructure SA and the release of this discussion paper. This submission will primarily focus on the infrastructure needs of primary producers, but will also take in to account that they and their families are part of regional communities.

Primary Producers SA is the peak body for primary producers in SA.

It has 6 Commodity Group Members:

- Grain Producers SA (GPSA)
- Livestock SA (LSA)
- S.A. Dairyfarmers Association (SADA)
- Wine Grape Council of SA (WGCSA)
- Horticulture Council of SA
- Australian Forest Products Association (SA) (AFPA)

Transport

Transport infrastructure is a high priority for all regional communities. Safety, amenity and efficiency of our road network is fundamental to living in regional SA.

A major cost of doing business in the regions is freight. This is particularly so with primary production which is the major activity in our regions, but also very important to mining, manufacturing, tourism, retail and most other businesses in the regions.

PPSA welcomed the commitment to the “90 day project” between Primary Producers SA (PPSA), PIRSA and DPTI. This looked specifically at identifying how we could increase freight efficiency and cut costs for primary producers and other road transport users. The focus on extending the heavy vehicle network and “fixing” first and last mile issues has resulted in a very significant efficiency improvement and big productivity improvements.

Many farmers, contractors and carriers spent significant time in helping to put together a long list of possible improvement and providing data which allowed the prioritisation to get the “best bang for the buck”.

We would urge this collaboration continue, as there are still efficiencies to be gained. Many of these are at a Local Government level, and about allowing farmers to gain appropriate council road access to the heavier freight routes. Much of this is about access permission, not large capital expenditure.

Strategically, the work was done to work out which would have the most impact on the highest number of businesses. This has resulted in far better access to many saleyards and silos. The heavy freight access has about tripled over the last 3 years, resulting in less trucks on roads, and far less cost to get our goods to market.

Passing lanes and road duplications are expensive, but must keep pace with the growth of traffic on our roads. Our major arterial roads in to regional SA are experiencing increased traffic, and future plans need to recognise that several single carriageways have limitations and safety issues when traffic volumes reach certain levels. Examples are Highway one between Port Augusta and Port Pirie and Tailem

Bend to the Victorian Border, the Victor Harbour Road and the Barossa to Riverland route amongst others.

As Primary Production and Mining dominate our merchandise exports sea ports are obviously important. South Australia's port infrastructure has served it well, but the move to much bigger ships has been a challenge. Also, the fact that some of our ports are surrounded by retail and other development is not ideal for redevelopment.

Port Adelaide (incl. Outer Harbour) is a reasonable port and services much of the State. Eyre Peninsula, with the shallow Thevenard and the challenges of access to Port Lincoln, is in need of a deep sea port. There are 3 options known publicly and it is important that the correct choice is made. The cost of getting grain exported from Eyre Peninsula is not really competitive under the current circumstances. About 3 years okay a comparison with Geraldton in WA and that found a difference of about \$50 per tonne. They are closer to our markets, but that was only a small part of the difference.

Iron ore and hydrogen are also possible exports in the near future so also need to be catered for and a multi-user facility would probably be the best option.

We have seen the decline of rail for short to medium haulage tasks, particularly where there is no other commodity use but grain. Certainly, an efficient port with heavy haulage access, ideally allowing paddock to port access is the ideal.

The Road from Monarto to Truro has been gradually upgraded and now part of the heavy haulage route. This is an attractive route for those heading north of Adelaide and also for those travelling to Port Adelaide or the northern suburbs. This road can be improved with a reasonable level of spending on passing lanes and improving a couple of intersections.

Airports are very important in some of our regions further from Adelaide. We have seen some improvement to some of the facilities, but not all. Air travel has become even more important as some services are hard to access in some regions.

Water

Water for towns, industry, irrigation and farms creates a need for reliable supply and infrastructure. Adelaide and much of the State has a reliance on River Murray water. Given this, the SA Water system is very important to much of SA. Maintenance of these assets is vital.

Infrastructure for irrigation is also very important and SA leads the way with the efficiency of the delivery of water for irrigation. Both Government and industry have a role to play in ensuring this is efficient and where possible infrastructure be there for expansion. We are currently seeing that with the Bolivar irrigation expansion.

SA Water rates are proving to be a very high cost for intensive animal husbandry. In some areas they have identified local infrastructure to try and use sources alternative to SA Water.

Energy

Energy is in a transformational stage. Generation has changed for ever, but the transmission infrastructure remains vital. The blackout on Eyre Peninsula in September 2016 showed how reliant we are on reliable energy supply, and the potential outcomes of extended outages.

Also, with the heavy reliance of SA on renewables, we welcome the interconnector with NSW.

Eyre Peninsula faces challenges with both supply and transmission. The Electranet proposal to duplicate the line to Port Lincoln is very important. On western Eyre Peninsula the transmission lines are unreliable and outages frequent and can be lengthy.

Internet and Mobile infrastructure

Communications remains a big problem in many of our regions. There are still over 100 recognised black spots for mobiles. These are expensive to fix and hence progress has been slow. A lack of mobile reception has business, safety and amenity issues. With the way business is now done (e.g. selling grain at harvest) people in black spots are at a significant financial disadvantage.

Similar issues occur with a lack of internet connectivity. Often there is access but speeds are extremely slow. A whole range of aids for doing business and marketing are available, and a lack of access does leave those denied this access at a considerable disadvantage.

Health

Regional SA has an ageing population so it's hospitals and other medical facilities are very important. The standard of the infrastructure and equipment determines what procedures can occur at each hospital. If not up to standard then the patient needs to travel. Good aged care facilities are also important to keep the elderly close to their families.

Education

Many country schools have closed over the years as populations and family size have reduced. The standard of schools across SA varies with age, but it is important capital works programmes address areas of need.

There is considerable TAFE infrastructure underutilised across the State. This should be opened up to other training providers, or other community uses. Many rural industries are experiencing workforce and skills shortages.

PPSA thank Infrastructure SA for the opportunity to comment and wish them well in their deliberations.

Rob Kerin

Chair

Primary Producers SA

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