

Horsham Bypass Study for VicRoads, October 2015

VicRoads completed a planning study to identify the most appropriate route to bypass Horsham. Two options were considered, Option B2 and Option D both of which commence south of Horsham, pass east of the town before returning to the Western Highway at different points. Option D was selected as the preferred alignment. Option B2 was discarded due to concerns regarding its impact on Horsham Aerodrome and its greater productivity impact on farmland.

Phillips Agribusiness was commissioned to consider the impact that Option D would have on agriculture with particular reference to direct land loss, severance and interruptions to farming operations. A summary of the report's conclusions are as follows:

- 1 Five major agricultural impacts on land holdings were identified through the construction of a bypass. These include direct land loss, severance, loss or damage to infrastructure, changes in access and restrictions to vehicle and machinery movement. They are described in the various submissions received how they impact upon different land holdings.
- 2 A major concern of one of the large land holding families is that a history of consolidating land to achieve farming efficiency is now being faced with fragmentation. Agricultural businesses are land dependent and not readily relocated. The only amelioration option appears to be financial compensation and the acceptance of a permanent loss of productivity and convenience of operation to the properties affected.
- 3 Assuming the current alignment design is final, little can be done to modify or reduce direct land loss. Severance is more receptive to amelioration through land consolidation between adjoining landowners, duplication of facilities on severed blocks or where impact is permanent, be addressed through the compensation process.
- 4 Notwithstanding the above, there is strong community support for a bypass of Horsham. One of the prime functions of the bypass is to facilitate regional transport movement from Horsham's Central Activity District and to support local agricultural production and processing infrastructure. Option D appears to meet this objective but like all bypass options, impose some cost on the affected land holders.