29th April 2009

To
Hon Paul Holloway, Minister for Urban Development and Planning
Hon Patrick Conlon, Minister for Transport
Cc Tony Piccolo, MP, Member for Light
Chief Executive, Mayor and councilors, Gawler Council
Cc Delfin Lend Lease

Dear Ministers Holloway and Conlon,

Re: Issues arising from the Town of Gawler “Gawler East and environs new urban area north/north east locality resident meeting” held on 6th April 2009

Several members of the Gawler Environment and Heritage Association (GEHA) recently attended the above-mentioned meeting, at which many residents expressed strong concerns about traffic problems likely to result from the proposed Gawler East development and their frustration about the lack of available information. These concerns are shared by the Gawler Environment and Heritage Association. We believe that a dramatic increase in the size of the town, without adequate traffic solutions, will further strain the local infrastructure, will erode Gawler’s identity as a separate and unique town of heritage significance and will adversely affect the lifestyles of Gawler’s residents.

It was clear at the meeting that the many residents of Gawler East and Evanston in attendance do not want large increases in traffic in the streets in and around where they live. They brought up concerns about safety, noise, pollution, decreased house values in some areas, parking and access to amenities such as existing shops and schools. It was also very clear that current residents greatly value the lifestyles that they have chosen and feel that large increases in traffic in residential streets would have a negative impact on these lifestyles. Some of the comments made were:

- “We chose to live here because of the lifestyle........If you add lots of traffic to Gawler, it will be terrible throughout Gawler, including around Trinity [College]. Then you haven’t got “the best of town and country”, you’ve got a pigsty.”
- “Most people here are very frustrated. We want to maintain our lifestyle. Please think of something that takes away from all of that (putting increased traffic down our streets).”
- “We are sick and tired of the congestion and (don’t want) encroachments on our lifestyle.”
- “We shouldn’t be happy just to patch up problems”
“Council should fight for the residents of Gawler, protect the interests of the residents. Get the traffic to flow north to south – end of story”.
“We are punching in the dark because the Government has decided we are not ready to know”.
“If we do not get Government openness then they are not a Government of ours and the Delfin development will not even get off the ground”.
“Gawler residents need to be able to decide their future direction. Enough is enough”.

The current population of Gawler is around 20,000. Developments earmarked for the southern parts of the town are expected to bring a further 10,000. We heard at the meeting that developments at Gawler East and Concordia would bring a further 10,000 and 15,000 respectively. In addition ongoing infill development is adding significant numbers. While residents at the meeting did not want the increased traffic from such an increase in population to be channeled down existing residential streets, there was support for the idea of major new roads being built to the east of Gawler, away from existing residential areas, such as north-east and south-east bypasses. There was also a great deal of concern about how traffic from the new development would cross the South Para and how traffic in and out of the town centre could be managed, as there is already a great deal of congestion.

GEHA feels that releasing the draft Development Plan Amendment (DPA) for this area in the very near future will not allow enough time for these traffic issues (not to mention other, non-traffic related, environmental and community issues) to be resolved satisfactorily before any new developments are approved. This would exacerbate the concerns and frustration felt by Gawler’s residents.

We are also aware that proposals for other major population centres near Gawler in Barossa, Light and Mallala councils are being proposed as part of the government’s 30 year strategic plan investigation of new urban centres. These are also adding to a sense of alarm in the community that we are in for decades of upheaval and disruption. This is an unfair imposition on the Gawler community and will undoubtedly result in ongoing negative reactions from many people.

GEHA feels it would be appropriate for the State Government to delay the release of the draft DPA until development already earmarked for the southern areas of the town has been completed and the impacts of this development can be assessed.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Jamieson
Convener