VicRoads

Western Highway Project – Section 3: Ararat to Stawell

Social Impact Assessment Report

November 2012

This Social Impact Assessment Report] *("Report"):*

1. *Has been prepared by GHD Pty Ltd ("GHD") for VicRoads;*
2. *May only be used for the purpose of informing the Environment Effects Statement and draft Planning Scheme Amendment for the Western Highway Project (and must not be used for any other purpose); and*
3. *May be provided to the Department of Planning and Community Development for the purpose of public exhibition as part of the Environment Effects Statement and Planning Scheme Amendment for the Western Highway Duplication Project.*

The services undertaken by GHD in connection with preparing this Report were limited to those specifically detailed in Section '4. Methodology' of this Report.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this Report are based on assumptions made by GHD when undertaking services and preparing the Report ("Assumptions"), as specified in Section '4. Methodology' and throughout this Report.

GHD excludes liability for errors in, or omissions from, this Report arising from or in connection with any of the assumptions being incorrect.

Subject to the paragraphs in this section of the Report, the opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this Report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation. GHD has not, and accepts no responsibility or obligation to update this Report to account for events or changes occurring subsequent to the date that the Report was signed.

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This report sets out the findings of the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Technical Study carried out as part of the Environment Effects Statement for the duplication of the Western Highway between Ararat and Stawell. The report includes a review of existing social conditions; an assessment of community responses to the planning study; a risk assessment and an impact assessment of the options followed by a discussion of potential mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts and enhance potential social benefits of the project.

The SIA was undertaken in accordance with the Minister for Planning's Final EES Scoping Requirements and the objective of the Environment Effects Statement which was:

- *To protect residents' well-being and minimise any dislocation of residents or severance of communities, to the extent practicable.*

As part of this SIA, a review of previous consultation activities conducted by VicRoads prior to the EES process was undertaken. This review included an analysis of key issues and the determination of social impacts that would require further investigation.

An existing conditions assessment was undertaken and included a review of relevant local and State government social and planning policies, an analysis of the social profile of the study area, a review of community services, facilities and cultural and social values, and a meeting with Council officers to gather information on strategic development objectives and community functioning within the study area.

The SIA team participated in consultation activities including attending the landholder information sessions to speak with landowners and interested community members and conducting individual landholder meetings with people that would be impacted by the Project.

A multi-criteria assessment of alignment options was conducted based on information from the existing conditions assessments. The outcome was the selection of a preferred alignment to take forward to the risk and impact assessment presented in this report. The proposed alignment is described in Section 6. The assessment and selection for the proposed alignment is documented in Chapter 5 (Project Alternatives) of the EES for Section 3, and in the Options Assessment Report (Technical Appendix B to the EES).

The SIA process found that community attitudes towards the Project were mixed with concerns raised about potential amenity impacts, including an increase in noise levels and impacts on visual amenity. Concerns were also raised about potential property acquisition, severance of agricultural land and changes in access arrangements to local properties. The community of Great Western raised particular concerns about the impact of the proposed bypass on local businesses and places of cultural and social value. However, community members also identified that they thought by-passing Great Western could increase the amenity of the town and that the Project could result in higher levels of safety, particularly with regard to accessing properties.

To identify and assess the potential Social impacts that could arise from the Project, a Risk and Impact Assessment was completed. The Social Impact Assessment was conducted under four main categories which included relevant indicators to measure the potential social risk. The main potential social risks were considered to be:

- Pressures on settlement patterns

The likelihood of the Project leading to an adverse change in settlement patterns is very low. This is because existing planning controls are designed to prevent intensive development in the study area.

- Changes to the distribution of residents

It is likely that any future development would be planned to take account of the location of the Project, and this may affect the distribution of residents in the long term. In particular, the Project may encourage more development in Great Western. However, as noted above, this would not be of a scale that would lead to a significant change. Therefore, the impact of the Project on the distribution of residents is assessed as being a Negligible Impact.

- Changes to the demographic characteristics of the Study Area

Changes to demographic characteristics are predicted to be small and consequently have a low social impact. This is due to the planning controls and geographic factors that would limit development and hence demographic change. Any new people who move to the area are likely to have similar socio-economic characteristics to the existing population. This is based on conversations with people who have moved into the study area previously. This would also minimise any adverse social impacts.

- Dislocation for individuals and communities

A maximum of one dwelling would be acquired as a result of the project. This is a minor social impact compared with other similar transport infrastructure upgrade projects.

- Severance and accessibility changes for individuals and communities

There is expected to be some localised impacts on travel times for landowners. However, overall benefits for road safety and Highway operations would be provided for general users. Access to community facilities and focal points would not be adversely affected by the Project. Access to the community facilities in Great Western for locals may be improved due to significantly reduced through traffic in the town.

- Amenity impacts to individuals and communities

The likelihood of the impact on amenity is certain if the Project proceeds and it would affect a high proportion of the households within the study area. A particular concern is the high number of houses (12) where the noise level would increase by 10 db (A) or more. It is acknowledged that part of the increase in noise in some locations would occur independently of the Project due to increased traffic volumes. While there is a large number of households that would experience a change of varying degrees, they are concentrated in one local area, around Great Western township and more specifically around the new Bypass.

- Construction Stage Impacts

The potential social impacts of construction include:

- Disruption from the presence of the construction workforce – most likely to be caused by their movements to and from construction sites
- Reduced amenity for adjacent residents from construction activities, including: increased traffic noise, dust visual impact and
- Property access interruptions during construction

This is not considered to be a longer term negative impact, rather it is an acknowledgement that many people would be affected by construction, however this would be offset by the future benefit that they would receive when it is completed.

- Valued Places and Spaces

It is considered that access to sites in Great Western may be slightly changed for people coming into the town, but there would be minimal difference within the town. Access to Seppelt's Winery and Best's Winery would be changed, as travellers would need to make a conscious decision to leave the new road and enter Great Western. This may affect casual visitation to these facilities. Access to other sites within Great Western would only be minimally changed. Access to the Sisters Rocks, the Stawell Park Caravan Park and Grange Golf Club would be changed, but there would be no effect on the actual facilities. It is unlikely that there would be any decrease in the use of these sites as a result of the Project, as these are all destination sites. A minor change in access arrangements is unlikely to affect travel intentions.

The Project is unlikely to have a negative effect on access to, and use of, valued community facilities. It is more likely that removing through traffic through the town of Great Western would be seen as a social benefit from the Project, as it would enable easier movement around the town and hence to places of local social value.

Overall, the social impacts of the Project would be low. However, there are two impacts that are considered to be of moderate social impact. These are:

- Amenity impacts to individuals and communities during the operation and construction of the Project; and
- Disruption to access during construction.

1. Introduction

This report sets out the findings of the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) Technical Study carried out as part of the Environment Effects Statement for the duplication of the Western Highway between Ararat and Stawell. The report includes a review of existing social conditions; an assessment of community responses to the planning study; a risk assessment and an impact assessment of the preferred alignment followed by a discussion of potential mitigation measures to minimise adverse impacts and enhance potential social benefits of the Project.

1.1 Project Overview

The Western Highway (A8) is being progressively upgraded as a four-lane divided highway for approximately 110 kilometres (km) between Ballarat and Stawell (hereafter "the Western Highway Project" or 'the Project"). As the principal road link between Melbourne and Adelaide, the Western Highway serves interstate trade between Victoria and South Australia and is the key corridor through Victoria's west, supporting farming, grain production, tourism and a range of manufacturing and service activities.

Currently, more than 5500 vehicles travel on the highway west of Ballarat each day, including 1500 trucks.

The Western Highway Project consists of three stages:

- Section 1: Ballarat to Beaufort
- Section 2: Beaufort to Ararat
- Section 3: Ararat to Stawell

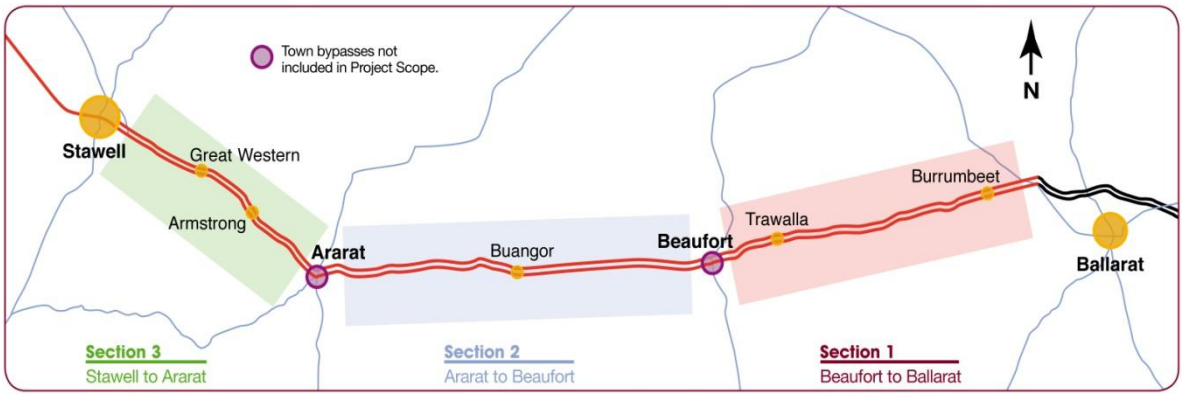


Figure 1 The Western Highway Project

1.1.1 Project Proponent

The proponent for the Project is the Roads Corporation trading as VicRoads. The Roads Corporation is a Victorian statutory authority for arterial roads (including highways), established under the *Transport Act 1983*. It is one of several State government agencies that assist the Government to achieve its integrated transport policy objectives. VicRoads also administers a number of other Acts and Regulations including the *Road Management Act 2004* and the *Road Safety Act 1986*. VicRoads Chief Executive is accountable to the Minister for Roads, reporting through the Secretary of the Department of Transport.

1.1.2 Project Objectives

The objectives of the Project specified by VicRoads are to:

- Provide safer conditions for all road users by:
  - Reducing the incidence of head-on and run-off-road crashes;
  - Improving safety at intersections; and
  - Improving safety of access to adjoining properties;
- Improve efficiency of freight by designing for High Productivity Freight Vehicles;
- Provide adequate and improved rest areas; and
- Locate alignment to allow for possible future bypasses of Beaufort and Ararat.

1.2 Project and Study Areas

1.2.1 Project Area

The Section 3 project area was defined for the purposes of characterising the existing conditions for the Project, and to consider alignment alternatives. The project area encompasses a corridor extending up to 1,500 metres either side (east and west) of the edge of the road reserve, except around Great Western where the project area extends up to 1,800 metres (m) (encompassing the extent of new alignment possibilities).

1.2.2 Social Impact Assessment Study Area

A study area has been defined for the purpose of this social impact assessment which is different to the project area described above. This is because the community of the study area extends well beyond the Western Highway. It includes all of the people who live in proximity to the Western Highway but also people who live on the roads running off the Highway and who rely on it for access. It also includes consideration of the broader regional and State community that use the Highway.

For the purposes of the Social Impact Assessment, the study area includes the populations in the surrounding areas which may be affected by the Project. These are defined as being the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census Collection Districts (CCDs) which intersect or border the Western Highway in the study area (Figure 2).

The Local Government Areas which encompass the study area are:

- Rural City of Ararat
- Shire of Northern Grampians.

The Project does not include consideration of bypassing Ararat or Stawell. The Project does include a bypass of Great Western.

1.3 General Description of the Project Area

1.3.1 Location and Topography

Section 3 of the Project commences at Pollard Lane, Ararat and extends for approximately 24 km to Gilchrist Road, Stawell. The highway bypasses the town of Great Western, including a crossing of part of a former landfill. The alignment also extends along the existing highway alignment, which bypasses the locality of Armstrong. The alignment also involves two crossings of the Melbourne to Adelaide railway, and crosses eight major waterways and 26 minor waterways (tributaries, drainage lines and irrigation channels).

The topography is undulating. Apart from the forested Ararat Regional Park, which borders the first 3.5 km of the highway, and other small remnants, the surrounding land use is predominately agricultural (grazing, cropping, viticulture).

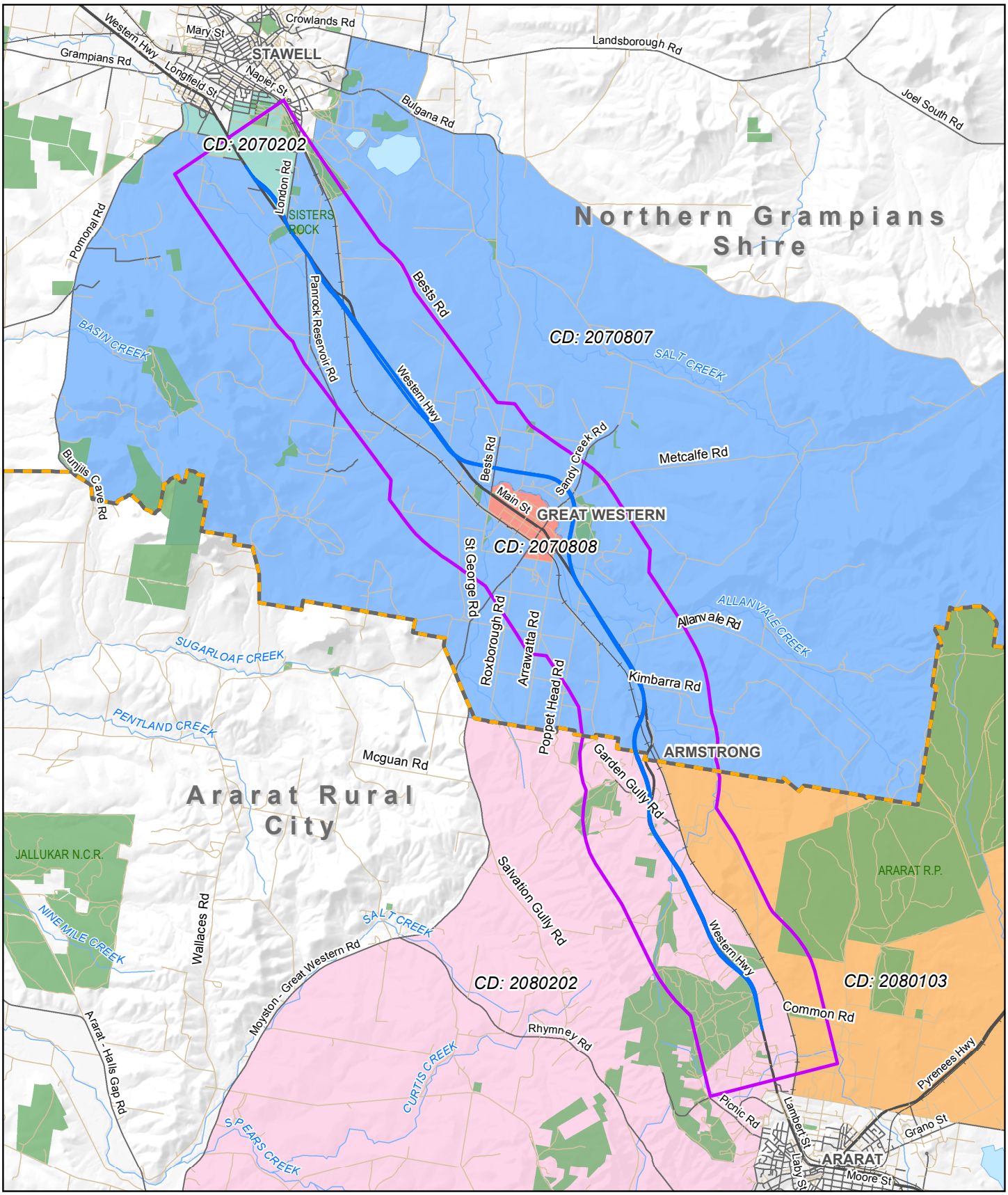
The small township of Great Western is located about halfway between Ararat and Stawell, and had a population of 182 in the 2006 census with 83 dwellings. The town is a focal point of the nationally significant Grampians Wine Region. The proposed alignment would bypass this town and access would be via grade separated interchange facilities.

No State significant infrastructure such as major pipelines or power-lines is located within the study area.

1.3.2 Current and Expected Traffic Levels

Traffic Volumes have been sourced from the Traffic Analysis prepared by CPG Australia Pty Ltd in August 2009, and are based on the collection of one week of data, at a location east of Great Western. Future traffic volumes have been predicted using Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Governments (DITRDLG) growth rates between Ballarat and Horsham; i.e. 1.59% for the Highway and 1.00% for intersecting rural roads, for the design outlook period to 2040.

The predicted traffic increase does not take into account potential future urban development (however it is understood there is no new urban zoning proposed in the study area), nor does it factor the impact of future fuel price increases due to increasing oil scarcity.



LEGEND

- Study Area
- Proposed Alignment
- Municipal boundary

ABS CCD Boundary

- 2070202
- 2070807
- 2070808
- 2080103
- 2080202

- Parks
- Highway
- Sealed road (arterial & local)
- Unsealed road

Paper Size A4

0 0.5 1 2 3 4

Kilometers

Map Projection: Transverse Mercator
Horizontal Datum: GDA 1994
Grid: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 54

N

GHD CLIENTS | PEOPLE | PERFORMANCE

vicroads

VicRoads
Western Highway Project

Ararat to Stawell
Study Area

Job Number 31-27558
Revision B
Date 14 Nov 2012

Figure 2

180 Lonsdale Street Melbourne VIC 3000 Australia T 61 3 8687 8000 F 61 3 8687 8111 E melmail@ghd.com W www.ghd.com

G:\31\27558\GIS\Maps\Deliverables\Stage 3\RISK AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT\07_SOCIAL_IMPACT\3127558_S3_001_Study_Area_A4P.mxd

Data source: DSE, VicMap, 2012; VicRoads, 2012; GHD, Design, 2012; ABS, 2006. Created by:splaird

The average annual daily traffic volume was estimated to be 5374 vehicles per day (vpd) in 2009, approximately 24% of which were commercial vehicles (heavy vehicles). The volume is projected to increase to approximately 8764 vpd by the year 2040.

New data may become available with regards to traffic volumes for Section 3. As such, these traffic figures would be updated when possible.

1.4 The Project

This section sets out a summary of key elements of the Project which are relevant to the SIA. This information is taken from the full Project Description.

1.4.1 Proposed Alignment

A multi-criteria assessment of alignment options was conducted based on information from the existing conditions assessments. The outcome was the selection of a proposed alignment for further consideration in the EES for Section 3. The proposed alignment and associated construction corridor is the subject of the risk and impact assessment which is presented in this report and described in more detail in Section 4.9. The assessment of alignment options and selection of the proposed alignment is documented in Chapter 5 (Project Alternatives) of the EES, and in the Options Assessment Paper (Technical Appendix to the EES).

1.4.2 Duplication Construction Corridor

Where sections of the proposed alignment utilise the existing carriageway, the existing bi-directional road would be converted to a single direction carriageway, and a new a parallel carriageway would be constructed to serve traffic in the opposite direction.

Where the duplication involves construction of two new carriageways a construction corridor of typically 80-110 m would be required, and wider to account for constraints or topography. This width has been allocated in order to achieve the storage requirements of 25 m B Double heavy vehicles at wide median treatments, to achieve an appropriate level of clear zone associated with road side objects and allow for service roads.

The potential maximum area of construction footprint for the proposed duplication is set out in the Project Description. The construction footprint includes a buffer around the extent of design works such as batter slopes to allow for equipment access, machinery manoeuvring and laydown as needed. The width of the buffer typically varies from 0 m to 20 m depending on the constraints present or services which may need to be relocated. Where specialists identify sites of significance within the maximum construction footprint, these should be described in the impact assessment report. Mitigation such as designated no-go zones for machinery may be recommended and appropriate in areas outside of the design footprint, but within the construction footprint.

A clear zone is to extend 10 m either side of the edge of the traffic lanes (inclusive of pavement areas for the inner and outer shoulders of the carriageway) where the topography is suitable. Within this clear zone it is assumed that any obstructions such as power poles or trees would be removed for safe

operation of the highway. Alternatively, protection of these 'obstructions' with barriers is one possible impact mitigation option that could be examined by specialists during the risk assessment phase. Clear zone widths vary along the alignment and vary depending on topography and other obstructions that cannot be moved.

The construction corridor would be consistent with that required for clear zone purposes and to contain the construction footprint as identified above. It is considered to be of sufficient width to contain all construction activities required.

1.4.3 Noise Attenuation

In accordance with the Traffic Noise Reduction Policy (VicRoads, 2005), noise attenuation measures may be recommended to mitigate traffic noise in certain circumstances.

1.4.4 Lighting and Traffic Signals

The project would not necessitate the installation of traffic signals. It is envisaged that street lighting would be provided at all interchange and wide median treatment locations. VicRoads has developed standards of lighting that must be complied with to ensure the adequate lighting of all roads. Standards would apply to lighting for the following areas on Section 3:

- Freeways and arterial roads;
- Railway crossings;
- Rest areas;
- Changes in carriageway width (merge areas);
- Median openings; and
- Ramps.

1.4.5 Visual and Landscape

Native vegetation would be removed where necessary for construction purposes. The duplicated highway alignment is subject to continued design development to reduce the impact on existing vegetation. VicRoads would develop a landscape plan to vegetate the road reserve following construction. The design and species selection would be sympathetic to the existing landscape values of the project area.

1.4.6 Rest Areas and Truck Stops

VicRoads has produced a Rest Area Route Plan for the Western Highway Project. Indicative locations for rest areas have been proposed between Ararat and Stawell; these are subject to review for suitability with the adopted alignment.

It was determined by VicRoads that the additional rest areas for Section 3 would be truck parking bays. For the northbound carriageway, a new truck parking bay has been located at approximately Ch. 19000-19800. For the southbound carriageway a truck parking bay has been located at approximately Ch. 9000 - 9500.

2. EES Requirements

2.1 Requirements for an EES

The *Environment Effects Act 1978* (EE Act) provides for the assessment of projects that are capable of having a significant effect on the environment. The Victorian Minister for Planning determined that VicRoads should prepare an EES under the EE Act to document the potential environmental effects of the project. The Minister's decision outlined the procedures and requirements applying to the preparation of the EES, in accordance with section 8B(5) of the EE Act.

The EES is to give attention to the investigation of potential environmental effects of the proposed works and relevant alternatives, as well as associated environmental mitigation and management measures. In making this decision, the Minister noted the following reasons:

- *The project is likely to result in significant adverse effects on biodiversity, including on native vegetation, listed flora and fauna species and ecological communities;*
- *The project could have significant effects on Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultural heritage;*
- *The project could have significant effects on existing land uses, infrastructure and communities, including on amenity and landscapes;*
- *The opportunities to avoid or minimise significant effects through the selection of the roadway alignment and design, as well as mitigation and offsetting measures, requires further investigation;*
- *An integrated assessment of environmental effects associated with alternative alignments is needed to inform decision making.*

The assessment of the Project under the EE Act would inform the decision on approval of the Project, but does not constitute a statutory approval in its own right.

2.2 Controlled Action under the EPBC Act

The Project was also referred to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act).

The delegate for the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, determined the Project to be a controlled action that requires assessment and approval under the EPBC Act on 20 December 2010.

The relevant controlling provisions for the Project under the EPBC Act are:

- *Threatened species and ecological communities (Sections 18 and 18A).*

The EES process is to be applied as an accredited process under the EPBC Act in accordance with the bilateral agreement between the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments. This means that the Commonwealth Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities would make a decision whether to approve the Project under the EPBC Act, based on the EES and not a separate assessment process.

2.3 EES Objectives

For the social impact assessment aspects of the Western Highway Duplication, the relevant draft evaluation objective outlined in the EES Scoping Requirements is:

- *To protect residents' wellbeing and minimise any dislocation of residents or severance of communities, to the extent practicable.*

2.4 EES Scoping Requirements

The EES Scoping Requirements for the social impact assessment aspects are as follows:

- *The EES should assess the potential social effects of the Project, particularly on nearby residents and surrounding communities. It should include an assessment of:*
  - The existing social and community conditions in the vicinity of the Project and relevant alternatives, including the settlement pattern, the distribution of residents in the vicinity of the site, and their demographic characteristics, and patterns of community interaction and social foci;
  - Potential effects on local residents and communities during the construction stage;
  - Potential effects on places with particular cultural, recreational or aesthetic values, particularly with regard to significant regional locations;
  - The potential for residents and communities, or parts of communities in the vicinity of the Project, to be affected through dislocation, severance of accessibility or reduction of their amenity (in relation to visual amenity, noise other changes to the character of the area) resulting from development of the proposed Project or relevant alternatives; and
  - Proposed measures to address potential adverse social effects, having regard to these, the likely residual effects on local residents and communities.

3. Legislation, Policy and Guidelines

This section reviews the relevant social and community legislation and policy for this Project. This includes Commonwealth, State and Local legislation and policy. An overview of the relevant acts and policies and a brief description of the relevant clauses or elements are provided.

3.1 Commonwealth Government

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) is the key Commonwealth legislation governing environmental protection in Australia.

The objectives of the EPBC Act are to:

- Provide for the protection of the environment, especially matters of national environmental significance;
- Conserve Australian biodiversity;
- Provide a streamlined national environmental assessment and approvals process;
- Enhance the protection and management of important natural and cultural places; and
- Control the international movement of plants and animals (wildlife), wildlife specimens and products made or derived from wildlife promote ecologically sustainable development through the conservation and ecologically sustainable use of natural resources.

The Act notes the principles of ecologically sustainable development which should be applied in all project assessments:

a) *Decision-making processes should effectively integrate both long-term and short-term economic, environmental, social and equitable considerations;*

b) *If there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation;*

c) *The principle of inter-generational equity -- that the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations;*

d) *The conservation of biological diversity and ecological integrity should be a fundamental consideration in decision-making; and*

e) *Improved valuation, pricing and incentive mechanisms should be promoted.*

The Act also explicitly makes reference to social considerations in Section 136.

> *Subdivision B—Considerations for approvals and conditions*
>
> *136 General considerations*
>
> *(1) In deciding whether or not to approve the taking of an action, and what conditions to attach to an approval, the Minister must consider the following, so far as they are not inconsistent with any other requirement of this Subdivision:*
>
> *(b) Economic and social matters.*

3.2 State Government

3.2.1 State Legislation

The following Acts are applicable to social considerations:

- *Transport Integration Act 2010*
- *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*
- *Planning and Environment Act 1987.*

3.2.1.1 Transport Integration Act 2010

The *Transport Integration Act 2010* (TIA) highlights the need for:

- Social and economic inclusion (Section 8)
- Economic prosperity (Section 9)
- Integration of transport and land use (Section 11)
- Safety and health and wellbeing (Section 13).

The relevant sections are set out below:

> ***Section 8: Social and economic inclusion***
>
> *The transport system should provide a means by which persons can access social and economic opportunities to support individual and community wellbeing including by:*
>
> *(a) Minimising barriers to access so that so far as is possible the transport system is available to as many persons as wish to use it*
>
> *(b) Providing tailored infrastructure, services and support for persons who find it difficult to use the transport system.*

> ***Section 9: Economic prosperity***
>
> *The transport system should facilitate economic prosperity by:*
>
> *(a) Enabling efficient and effective access for persons and goods to places of employment, markets and services*
>
> *(b) Increasing efficiency through reducing costs and improving timeliness*
>
> *(c) Fostering competition by providing access to markets*
>
> *(d) Facilitating investment in Victoria*
>
> *(e) Supporting financial sustainability.*

Section 11: Integration of transport and land use

(1) The transport system should provide for the effective integration of transport and land use and facilitate access to social and economic opportunities.

(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), transport and land use should be effectively integrated so as to improve accessibility and transport efficiency with a focus on:

(a) Maximising access to residences, employment, markets, services and recreation

(b) Planning and developing the transport system more effectively

(c) Reducing the need for private motor vehicle transport and the extent of travel

(d) Facilitating better access to, and greater mobility within, local communities.

(3) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the transport system and land use should be aligned, complementary and supportive and ensure that:

(a) Transport decisions are made having regard to the current and future impact on land use

(b) Land use decisions are made having regard for the current and future development and operation of the transport system

(c) Transport infrastructure and services are provided in a timely manner to support changing land use and associated transport demand.

(4) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the transport system should improve the amenity of communities and minimise impacts of the transport system on adjacent land uses.

Section 13: Safety and health and wellbeing

(1) The transport system should be safe and support health and wellbeing.

(2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the transport system should:

(a) Seek to continually improve the safety performance of the transport system through:

(i) Safe transport infrastructure

(ii) Safe forms of transport

(iii) Safe transport system user behaviour

(b) Avoid and minimise the risk of harm to persons arising from the transport system

(c) Promote forms of transport and the use of forms of energy which have the greatest benefit for, and least negative impact on, health and wellbeing.

3.2.1.2 Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008

The *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* recognises the State's role in promoting, protecting and reducing inequalities in public health and wellbeing. It promotes collaboration between all levels of Government and industry, business, communities and individuals.

The following objectives in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* (Part 2, Section 4) need to be considered in the social impact assessment of the Project:

Part 2, Section 4 Objective

(1) The Parliament recognises that:

(a) the State has a significant role in promoting and protecting the public health and wellbeing of persons in Victoria

(b) public health and wellbeing includes the absence of disease, illness, injury, disability or premature death and the collective state of public health and wellbeing

(c) public health interventions are one of the ways in which the public health and wellbeing can be improved and inequalities reduced

(d) where appropriate, the State has a role in assisting in responses to public health

concerns of national and international significance.

(2) In the context of subsection (1), the objective of this Act is to achieve the highest attainable standard of public health and wellbeing by:

(a) protecting public health and preventing disease, illness, injury, disability or premature death

(b) promoting conditions in which persons can be healthy

(c) reducing inequalities in the state of public health and wellbeing.

The Act also defines the following principle:

Part 2, Section 7 Principle of primacy of prevention

(1) The prevention of disease, illness, injury, disability or premature death is preferable to remedial measures.

Part 2, Section 10 Principle of collaboration

Public health and wellbeing, in Victoria and at a national and international level, can be enhanced through collaboration between all levels of Government and industry, business, communities and individuals.

3.2.1.3 The Planning and Environment Act 1987

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* has the objective of securing 'a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria'. It also addresses the protection of public utilities for the benefit of the community. The Act states that the objectives of planning in Victoria are:

(a) To provide for the fair, orderly, economic and sustainable use, and development of land

(b) To provide for the protection of natural and man-made resources and the maintenance of ecological processes and genetic diversity

(c) To secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria

(d) To conserve and enhance those buildings, areas or other places which are of scientific, aesthetic, architectural or historical interest, or of special cultural value

(e) To protect public utilities and other assets and enable the orderly provision and co-ordination of public utilities and other facilities for the benefit of the community

(f) To facilitate development in accordance with the objectives set out in paragraphs (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e)

(g) To balance the present and future interests of all Victorians.

3.2.2 State Policy

3.2.2.1 Ready for Tomorrow

State Government social policy is currently being revised as a result of the 2010 change of Government. The policy which was specific to regional Victoria was *Ready for Tomorrow – a Blueprint for Regional and Rural Victoria* (State Government of Victoria, 2010). Regional Development Victoria has indicated that no date has been set for when this policy will be reviewed.

3.2.2.2 Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan

The Central Highlands Regional Strategic Plan is the key overarching regional policy for the two municipalities covering the study area, together with adjacent municipalities.

The Strategic Plan notes that the major attributes of the region include:

- There is sustained population growth throughout the region. Many parts of the region are viewed as a sustainable living alternative to Melbourne and other regions.
- It is located on the east-west transport corridor connecting Melbourne, western Victoria and Adelaide, which is the Western Highway.
- It has the major concentration of Australia's gold mining heritage.
- Victoria's best developed and integrated regional higher education and training system network.
- Regional Victoria's strongest concentration of IT and computing services and capacity.
- Some of Victoria's most productive soils and quality horticultural growing conditions, which means that rural living should be carefully planned and limited to reduce impact on agriculture but to support existing settlement networks.
- A restructuring and diverse economy embracing new opportunities in such areas as IT, advanced manufacturing, education and tourism.
- Ballarat is Victoria's third largest urban area.

The Strategic Plan considers that the planned upgrade of the Western Highway would strengthen the region's comparative advantage against other regions in the State, as it would strengthen links with the rapidly growing western region of Melbourne.

The Project can contribute to the overall goals of the plan by minimising impacts on agricultural productivity, improving transport access for residents and businesses, enhancing the experiences of tourists and making the Western Highway safer for all road users.

3.2.3 State Strategies

VicRoads has noted (2010) that the Project aligns with key government strategic priorities which have social benefits, including reducing travel times and increasing road safety.

It also notes that the Project is part of the following strategies:

- Melbourne – Adelaide Corridor Strategy – Building Our National Transport Future, Department of Transport and Regional Services 2007.
- National Transport Links – Growing Victoria's Economy, Department of Infrastructure 2007.
- Western Highway M8/A8 Corridor Strategy – Deer Park to South Australian Border, VicRoads 1999.
- Arrive Alive! 2008 – 2017 Victoria's Road Safety Strategy.
- AUSLINK – Building our National Transport Future.

These strategies focus on transport related outcomes. However, they have both over-arching and

secondary social objectives, including:

- Road safety improvement, which reduces fatalities and injuries caused by travel, and also encourages social connectivity by enabling more people to travel safely.
- Enhancing social sustainability of regional areas through economic development which occurs as a result of better connections to national and international markets.
- Improving the life and employment opportunities for residents of rural areas, by enabling them to source goods and services more easily and cheaply, and by making it easier for them to travel for education, skills development and work.
- Enhancing safety and amenity for the majority of adjacent residents by improving road standards, reducing queuing and traffic congestions and bypassing residential areas where appropriate.

The objectives of these strategies are built into the Project objectives.

3.2.4 State Planning Policy Framework

The State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF) is administered by the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD). The SPPF is the planning policy which underpins all land use planning in Victoria. It consists of a series of clauses which set out specific policies for specific areas of planning. The SPPF is part of every planning scheme in Victoria. The relevant planning schemes for the Project are those for the Rural City of Ararat and the Northern Grampians Shire.

Each municipality also has a Local Planning Policy Framework (LPPF). The LPPF sets out the specific strategic planning policies of the municipality. Together, the SPPF and the LPPF provide the strategic planning framework for the assessment of any proposed land use and/or development in Victoria. Where a planning scheme amendment (PSA) or planning permit is required, the Project proponent must be able to demonstrate how the Project meets the objectives of the planning scheme. While the planning schemes are focussed on land use planning matters, many of the over-arching policies include a social policy dimension. The following clauses from the framework are relevant in determining the appropriate social objectives for the Project.

Clause 10 Operation of the State Planning Policy Framework

This clause indicates that a key objective of planning in Victoria relevant to this Project is the need to "secure a pleasant, efficient and safe working, living and recreational environment for all Victorians and visitors to Victoria" and "to balance the present and future interests of all Victorians". The clause provides justification for the consideration of social outcomes in land use planning.

Clause 11 Settlement

The Settlement Clause requires that planning should respond to the needs of existing and future communities and, as far as practical, contribute towards health and safety, diversity of choice, prevention of pollution to land and water, protection of environmentally sensitive areas and natural resources, and accessibility. *Clause 11.05-4 Regional planning strategies and principles* highlights the need for directing population growth in locations where services and utilities, including social infrastructure, can be provided in the most efficient and sustainable way. The clause also highlights the need for liveable

settlements and healthy communities by responding to the needs of the community and providing timely provision of social infrastructure and services.

Clause 16 Housing

This clause states that:

> *"Planning should provide for housing diversity, and ensure the efficient provision of supporting infrastructure.*
>
> *New housing should have access to services and be planned for long term sustainability, including walkability to activity centres, public transport, schools and open space.*
>
> *Planning for housing should include providing land for affordable housing."*

Clause 18 Transport

Planning should ensure an integrated and sustainable transport system that provides access to social and economic opportunities, facilitates economic prosperity, contributes to environmental sustainability, coordinates reliable movements of people and goods, and is safe.

Clause 19 Infrastructure

This clause outlines the need for fairer distribution and access to social infrastructure. Gaps and deficiencies in the service provision need to be identified and addressed.

3.3 Local Government Social Policy Context

The Western Highway Project Section 3 passes through the local government areas of the Rural City of Ararat and the Shire of Northern Grampians.

3.3.1 Rural City of Ararat

The Rural City of Ararat has several key policies which set out the preferred direction for the future of the municipality. The following policies were reviewed for this report:

- Council Plan.
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan.
- Municipal Strategic Statement.

3.3.1.1 Council Plan

The main social policy statement of the Rural City of Ararat is the Council Plan (2009). This plan sets out a series of strategic directions for the community, including:

Our People	*We value our people and our community, their sense of place and connectedness and will target our services to meet their needs.* *Key Outcomes relevant to the Western Highway SIA:* • *A community in which people of all abilities have equal access to facilities, services and activities.* • *A community in which people are actively involved in shaping the community to meets its needs.* • *A community in which people are better informed about the strengths, opportunities and challenges facing the community.* • *A community which encourages a healthy and active lifestyle.* • *A community where people can readily access the services they need.* • *A community where people can feel safe as they use and enjoy public spaces and facilities.*
Our Culture	*We will strengthen the underlying community fabric by building upon the culture and heritage which defines our identity.* *Key Outcomes relevant to the Western Highway SIA:* • *A welcoming and inclusive community.* • *An attractive physical landscape.* • *A community in which residents are proud to live.* • *A community where all people are encouraged to engage with each other and participate in the future of our community.* • *A community that values its history and cultural heritage.* • *A community in which all people have access to appropriate recreational facilities and services.* • *A community that promotes and encourages participation in a diverse range of sporting and recreational activities.*
Our Economy	*We will enhance our community's prosperity through encouraging sustainable growth.* *Key Outcomes relevant to the Western Highway SIA:* • *Vibrant, active and viable industries within the area.* • *Attracting new businesses and residents whilst continuing to support those that are already here.* • *Pro-active response to a changing economic and business environment.* • *Environmentally responsible economic development.* • *Increased diversity in the local industry and businesses.* • *A community that recognises tourism as a key to economic prosperity.* • *Infrastructure in place to support a positive experience by people who visit the area.*

Our Environment	*We value our natural and built environment and want to manage, enhance and protect it, now and for future generations.* *Key Outcomes relevant to the Western Highway SIA:* • *A balanced approach to land use development to meet existing and future growth.* • *Preservation and enhancement of our natural and built environments.* • *Protection of the natural environment.* • *Promotion of bio diversity.* • *Reduction of the impact of weeds and pest animals.*
Our Organisation	*Our Council is open, fair and honest, engaging with the community to provide leadership and supporting our community through efficient and effective service provision.*

3.3.1.2 Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

Further objectives around access to transport are set out in the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (MPHWP). The over-arching objective is to improve social connectedness. The Plan notes that people are most commonly connected to family, schools, work and different types of community groups, clubs and organisations. Social inclusion is a key determinant of mental health and wellbeing. Transport connections and accessibility play an important role in developing and maintaining social connections. This issue is therefore important to assess in a SIA.

The transport-related objectives in the MPHWP are focussed on public transport. They are to achieve:

- Increased usage and utilisation of public transport.
- Improved public transport services for the municipality.

As the Western Highway is a major public transport route, this objective is directly relevant to the current Project.

3.3.1.3 Municipal Strategic Statement

The updated Ararat Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) was gazetted in November 2011. This section summarises some of the key messages from the MSS which are relevant to the current study.

- Settlement and Housing
  - *Changes in the structure, rather than the size, of the population are and will continue to be a major issue for the municipality into the foreseeable future. … Recent population decline has been more pronounced in the rural areas as a result of rural restructuring and people moving from these areas in search of alternative education and employment opportunities.*
  - *The decline in population will be offset by young families and empty nesters attracted by the high level of amenity and lifestyle and by growing employment opportunities.*
  - *The improvement in road and rail transport infrastructure to Melbourne and Ballarat and services such as Broad band or high speed Internet will enable more people to live in Ararat.*

- *The municipality retains a distinctive pattern of urban development based on separate townships and settlements that have developed as a result of historical, locational and environmental factors. There is the need to maintain a network of viable towns and settlements, contain development within these areas, and to limit the impact of surrounding agricultural activities on these settlements. It is also necessary to ensure that growth and development is only supported where environmental, water quality and effluent treatment management can be demonstrated.*

- Environment
  - *The Ararat Rural City contains many areas which have significant natural landscapes and features of environmental value, including natural wetlands and waterways, archaeological and historic features.*
  - *The municipality contains a number of places of historic, cultural and aboriginal significance which are important to the community including buildings, bridges, trees, landscapes and environments of national, state and local significance.*
- Economic Development
  - *Ararat Rural City's economy has traditionally been based on prosperous primary production, its high quality merino wool and employment generating from various government departments and functions. However, the economy is experiencing change.*
  - *Agriculture is diversifying, government departments and functions have been rationalised and the manufacturing sector is growing. Tourism, industrial development, the diversification of farming and an increasing emphasis on intensive agriculture such as wine production are growing components of the local economy.*
  - *Specific economic development strategies include:*
    - *Develop and promote the Western Highway Logistics Hub as the preferred location for industries requiring access and exposure to the highway, heavy vehicle activities, warehousing and transport businesses.*
    - *Discourage development along the Western Highway through Ararat which may be detrimental to its safety, efficiency and function.*
    - *Recognise Barkly Street and the Western Highway as important approaches into and corridors through Ararat and where tourist based activities should be encouraged.*

The primacy of Ararat as the major residential, service and business centre in the municipality is recognised.

Other social policies which were reviewed for the SIA are:

- Buangor Community Action Plan 2006-2009 (relevant to Section Two).
- Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2005-2006 (the objectives of this policy are also covered in the Council Plan).

3.3.2 Northern Grampians Shire

The four main policies which were reviewed for this study are the:

- Council Plan
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- Municipal Strategic Statement
- Great Western Community Plan.

Council Plan

The Northern Grampians Shire Council Plan (2009) documents several strategic objectives for development of the Shire's communities. These goals, and the specific objectives which may relate to the Western Highway Project, are as follows:

GOAL 1 - A healthy, supportive and safe community providing a sustainable, quality lifestyle

- *Ensure inclusiveness and access for all people.*
- *Support activities that encourage safe and responsible community behaviour.*

GOAL 2 - A sustainable natural and built environment that meets current and future needs

- *Participate in and promote the adoption of practices that support the sustainable use of energy in partnership with other regional and State bodies.*
- *Ensure appropriate management and development of roads, bridges, footpaths and shared paths.*
- *Plan and implement road safety and traffic management improvements.*
- *Provide accessible and sustainable parks and open spaces that provide opportunities for passive and active recreation.*
- *Develop and maintain township entrances and streetscapes that enhance and maintain the character of townships.*
- *Continue to develop and implement initiatives to preserve and maintain heritage buildings, items and places of interest.*

GOAL 3 - A sustainable economy attracting and encouraging new enterprises while supporting existing businesses

- *Improve the public infrastructure in Stawell and St. Arnaud to support their regional and service centre role.*
- *Support the provision of adequate tourism infrastructure to encourage business development.*

Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan

The Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan (2009) includes some specific objectives around transport accessibility. These are to achieve an:

- *Improved access to and availability of public transport options.*
- *Increased level of road safety.*

Municipal Strategic Statement

The Northern Grampians Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) was gazetted in January 2006. This document sets out the municipal profile and community vision upon which the planning scheme is based. More recent policy documents, including the Council Plan (2009), provide more current information on overall Council policy. Some of the key Council strategies from the MSS are to:

- *Ensure access to the Shire is maintained by the dual carriageway on the Western Highway, between Melbourne and Stawell, the Sunraysia Highway, between Ballarat and St Arnaud and passenger and freight train services.*
- *Promote and facilitate the development of Stawell as the Shire's largest urban centre.*
- *Provide for a vibrant small community at Great Western which is based on wine production and grape growing.*
- *Protect productive agricultural land for the purposes of agricultural production and for value-adding industries.*
- *Protect and enhance native flora and fauna to improve biodiversity, particularly the Shire's remnant forests, wetlands and grassland communities.*
- *Promote sustainable development by actively recognising and protecting natural and built assets*
- *Discourage inappropriate retail and residential land use on the Western Highway*
- *Focus development around existing community infrastructure and services to maximise the efficient use of community services in the municipality and surrounding region.*
- *Discourage the fragmentation of rural land by small lot subdivision as there is sufficient land zoned for smaller lot rural subdivision throughout the Shire.*
- *Discourage the use of rural land for purposes other than agriculture, horticulture, mining, extractive industry, leisure and recreation or natural systems, or uses which support these uses.*
- *Ensure that development on or neighbouring a site or precinct which is considered to have natural, archaeological, architectural, cultural or historic significance will give due consideration to the significance of the site.*

Specific objectives in the MSS which relate to the current Project are:

- *In Stawell, all urban development will be directed to the north of the Western Highway, ensuring that its role as a bypass is not prejudiced.*
- *To discourage inappropriate retail and residential land use on the Western Highway.*
- *In Great Western, all development with frontage to the Western Highway will have regard to the importance of the highway as a national road.*

Other social policies which have been reviewed for the SIA are:

- *Arts & Cultural Strategy 2008-2012*
- *Strategic Resource Plan 2010 -2014*
- *Community Access Plan 2011 to 2014.*

These reports provide an understanding of the overall social development objectives of the Shire; however they do not include any specific objectives for the study area.

Great Western Community Plan

The Great Western Community Plan (2009-2013) (the Plan) sets out the key development priorities of the community of Great Western. The objective of the Plan is to develop

- *"A vibrant village, well connected with its community, spirited in providing a safe, clean, self-sustaining and caring environment"*

The Plan lists eight priority issues which are affecting the future of Great Western. These are listed below, along with a summary of the issue statement.

Priority Issue 1: The Effects of the Bypass on Great Western

> *The community have embraced the proposal of a bypass as a positive step in the future of Great Western as a town.*
>
> *The Bypass will happen; Great Western must make the best of the bypass. This can be achieved by making the town appealing for visitors, and sustaining businesses with limited resources such as the shops, restaurants [and] wineries. The community has identified advantages of traffic issues which will allow for the community to develop as a village that can grow as a result of the proposed bypass.*
>
> *Liaison with VicRoads must continue through the Project development to maximise the efforts to ensure the town can prosper from a bypass … such as making sure the turn-off from the Highway into Great Western encourages visitation and signage promotes the town's assets and activities.*

Priority Issue 2: Sewerage Plan

> *Review the current proposal for implementation of a sewerage plan for Great Western. This is a considerable priority for the development of the town's future prosperity.*

Priority Issue 3: Road Safety - Stop vehicle speeding in Brunel Street and Stephenson Street

Brunel and Stephenson Streets are residential streets with speed restrictions including a school zone. It is not uncommon for vehicles, including heavy vehicles to use these streets as a bypass to the main Highway in order to overtake slower traffic on the main road through the town. This is dangerous for the community and other vehicles.

Council, VicRoads and Victoria Police to explore traffic calming options and implement as soon as possible. While the proposed Bypass will reduce traffic through the town, the issue is of peoples' safety and therefore not be allowed to wait to be addressed.

Priority Issue 4: Footpaths Gutters and Lighting

There is a demand for the town to have the guttering, footpaths and roadside surfaces to be replaced with new curbing, channelling and paving.

The community requires a safe and welcoming environment for residents and visitors. The roads, curb and guttering in Main Street do not allow for easy access for people with disabilities to the shops and traders.

Uniform lighting from Seppelt to Bests would create a common theme; other infrastructure should then match this theme to create the image of Great Western.

Priority Issue 5: Need to support Events in Great Western

This includes management of existing events and facilitation of new events:

The Great Western community currently hold several key events that not only cater for the town but also the region.

The community facilitate these events however requires assistance in organising and promoting these events to ensure they remain a part of the annual calendar.

Priority Issue 6: Public Transport

More frequent timetabling of bus service between Ararat and Stawell, at times that link with other public transport.

The aim is to *… provide a community link to larger town's services*

Options to achieve this include inclusion of Great Western in the transport connections project and negotiations with V/Line to ensure services still come through Great Western when the Bypass is completed.

Priority Issue 7: Recreation Facilities

Continued improvement of existing facilities is required to ensure they are servicing the community as required by current regulations and public expectations.

Priority Issue 8: Improve Public Toilets

Including public amenities, and toilets at recreation reserves (Football, Tennis etc).

Quality Public Toilets provide visitors with a positive first image of the town. Pride in their presentation encourages people to want to stop.

It is noteworthy that the first priority issue is the bypass of Great Western. This demonstrates that the community understands that the bypass would significantly affect the future of the town. Several of the other priority issues are also related to transport and township presentation.

Priorities 3 and 4 indicate that there are existing safety and accessibility issues in the town. Some of these may be resolved or further exacerbated by bypassing the town. In addition, easy access to Great Western for V/Line buses would be important in order to meet the objectives of Priority 6.

Other priorities listed above such as streetscape works may potentially be facilitated as part of the bypass process, after the existing Highway is downgraded to a local road. Other priority areas, such as development of recreation facilities may be more feasible if the bypass leads to increased development in the town.

4. Methods

4.1 Background to SIA

SIA is a social research tool used to review and assess the potential social impact of a planned intervention such as a policy change, public program or infrastructure development. It covers the intended and unintended social consequences, both positive and negative, of any social change processes invoked by those interventions, as explained by the International Association of Impact Assessment (IAIA, 2003).

The goal of impact assessment is to bring about a more ecologically, socio-culturally and economically sustainable and equitable environment. Impact assessment, therefore, promotes community development and empowerment, builds capacity, and develops social capital (social networks and trust). The focus of concern in SIA is a proactive stance to development and better development outcomes, not just the identification or amelioration of negative or unintended outcomes. Assisting communities and other stakeholders to identify development goals, and ensuring that positive outcomes are maximised, can be more important than minimising harm from negative impacts. SIA contributes to the process of adaptive management of policies, programs, plans and projects, and therefore needs to inform the design and operation of the planned intervention.

The following categories have been identified by the IAIA as a way to conceptualise social impacts:

- People's way of life: that is how they live, work, play and interact with one another on a day-to-day basis.
- Their culture: that is, their shared beliefs, customs, values and language or dialect.
- Their community: its cohesion, stability, character, services and facilities.
- Their political systems: the extent to which people are able to participate in decisions that affect their lives, the level of democratisation that is taking place, and the resources provided for this purpose.
- Their environment: the quality of the air and water people use; the availability and quality of the food they eat; the level of hazard or risk; dust and noise they are exposed to; the adequacy of sanitation; their physical safety; and their access to and control over resources.
- Their health and wellbeing: health is a state of complete physical, mental, social and spiritual wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- Their fears and aspirations: their perceptions about their safety, their fears about the future of their community, and their aspirations for their future and the future of their children.

4.2 Impact of Transport Infrastructure

New and up-graded roads, bridges, tunnels and bypasses can bring significant social benefits to regional communities, in terms of improved accessibility, better amenity in the local area and travel time savings for residents, travellers and transport operators. However, they can also have negative social impacts at the more local level. These can include the more obvious physical effects of local road closures or new roads cutting through farmland or neighbourhoods as well as psychological impacts such as those associated with effects on valued places or loss of friendship networks.

The long term social change processes triggered by road development can also have both positive and negative outcomes. This means that the needs of the community at both the local and regional levels must be balanced to ensure that the route development minimises any social disruption and maximises the social benefits.

4.3 Assessment Framework

During the course of several transport-focussed SIAs, Akin Planning and other social researchers have developed the following concepts to assess the social impacts of transport infrastructure:

- Severance occurs when people's ability to move around their local and regional area is reduced. Severance effects occur when local roads are cut off; connector roads are changed or suffer increased traffic movements; or when public transport routes are changed.
- Access benefits may occur when travelling times are reduced; there is easier access to community services and facilities, and when people have more transport choices available to them.
- Individual mobility relates to the transport choices that people have available to them and the decisions that affect the mode of travel they use for different trips.
- Dislocation effects occur primarily at the household and individual level. They include property disruption or acquisition, or people leaving an area due to significant changes to the valued features of their local environment.
- Amenity impacts are specific impacts on the attractiveness of a given area and the enjoyment of it. They may include changes to property, the general landscape, the noise environment, and also changes to the amenity of important community facilities.
- Policy context stems from the social and planning policies set out in State and local government policy. It informs the understanding of aspirations for future development of an area. Any infrastructure development proposal should be assessed in terms of how it contributes to social development goals.
- Community context is the expressed preferences and concerns of local peoples, which need to be considered in planning for infrastructure development. This includes their preferences for transport modes and access arrangements, concerns about amenity and other impacts and concerns about environmental impacts. The social issues analysis is a mechanism for incorporating community feedback into the assessment of options.

These general social impact categories have been matched to the EES scoping requirements to ensure that all relevant social issues are addressed in the impact assessment.

4.4 Cumulative Impact Assessment

Assessing the social impacts of projects to upgrade existing transport infrastructure requires assessing the cumulative impact of the development. That is, a road exists and already creates a social impact (generally in the area of amenity). It is known that the impact of that road would change over time, as the type and volume of traffic changes over time. For example, trucks have grown larger and larger over the decades, and the number of trucks travelling on regional highways has also increased over time. This has led to a change in the mix of traffic on these roads, which has had the side effect of creating negative amenity impacts for the residents of houses adjacent to these roads. In many cases these houses were built in times when the road carried a small amount of low impact traffic, and hence may have been constructed much closer to the road than may seem prudent today.

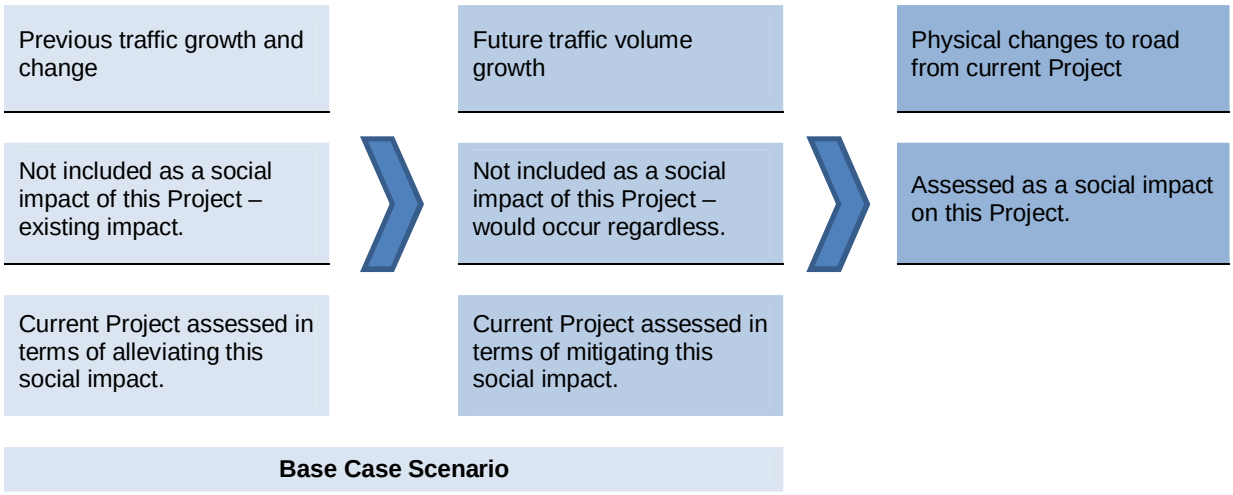
When assessing a road upgrade or duplication, we need to differentiate between:

1. The existing social impacts which have occurred over time due to changes in traffic composition – for example increased noise levels, difficulty in accessing adjacent properties.
2. Changes that would occur whether the road is upgraded or not, specifically increased traffic volumes which would occur independently of the project due to general population growth.
3. The changes which are actually caused by the project, which are usually the physical changes such as road widening and realignment, and access changes for local residents.

Points one and two are effectively the ‘base case’ or ‘do nothing’ scenario against which the project is assessed (Figure 3).

This makes a road widening or duplication quite distinct to planning for a new road. In that circumstance, a new social impact is introduced into an area where it did not previously exist, which is considered to be a greater social impact than upgrading of existing infrastructure (refer to Section 4.6).

Figure 3 Cumulative Social Impact



4.5 Assessing the Scale of Impacts

The impact of a project would be experienced differently by the affected parties depending on a wide variety of factors, including the scale of impact, their resilience to cope with change and the differential impact. It would be very difficult to rank how each individual or household is impacted by a project in comparison with other affected parties, as this would be contentious and intrusive for the people involved. However, the magnitude of different types of impacts is generally known. Table 1 indicates the magnitude of the different types of social impacts likely to be experienced by individuals or households as a result of a transport infrastructure project. The table shows that such a project does not just affect the adjacent landowners. Other members of the community would also be affected in various ways.

Table 1 Scale of impact for individual households

Highest	Property acquisition and household relocation. The level of impact depends on whether the household can obtain an appropriate substitute property within the local area, or whether they have to move away altogether. The loss of a household is also a significant community level impact.
Second highest	To remain in a dwelling located within 250 metres of the centreline of a new road. The level of impact depends on the topography and design of the road, the impact on access to the property and whether there has been any property acquisition. There is also a different impact in rural and residential areas. In rural areas the ability to mitigate visual and noise impacts may be low, whereas in a residential area many houses within this zone may not be in sight of the road.
Third highest impact	To remain in a dwelling located between 250 metres and 500 metres of the centreline of a new road. Again, the level of impact would depend on whether the dwelling is in a rural or residential area, the topography and any access changes.
General Community Impact	Where there are changes to general community functioning as a result of impacts at the household level, for example residents moving away as a result of property acquisition.

4.6 Comparison of Impacts

The impact of a transport infrastructure project would vary depending on the degree of change it introduces into a community. In assessing the magnitude and severity of the social impact of a specific proposal, it is important to understand that the amount of change is a key driver of impacts. Projects which introduce less primary change have a lower impact than those which cause considerable change – whether to the landscape, transport networks or community functioning. Table 2 categorises the degree of change that transport infrastructure projects may cause, and the significance of this in terms of social impact.

When assessing the social impact of a transport proposal, it is assumed that duplicating or upgrading an existing road would have a lower social impact than developing a new road in a new alignment, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Scale of impact of different road transport infrastructure developments

Option and rating	Reason for rating
More effective use of existing infrastructure with minimal change	This provides maximum utilisation of existing infrastructure while having the lowest severance and dislocation impacts.
Road in Tunnel	It is assumed that this would have a lower social impact than options entailing road widening and property acquisition, as it would 'bury' the severance, noise and amenity impacts.
Upgrade of existing road	This option is assumed to have a lower severance impact than a new road and makes use of existing community assets. However; high amenity and dislocation impacts are possible as dwellings may be in very close proximity to the existing road.
Development of a preserved corridor	Constructing in a preserved corridor which introduces noise, light and air quality impacts into an area without existing roads; however these should be mitigated by planning expectations that this impact would occur at some point.
New transport infrastructure in a totally new alignment	Constructing in a new corridor which introduces noise, light and air quality impacts unmitigated by planning expectation. New infrastructure outside a preserved corridor has the highest severance and dislocation impacts of all options because it is unexpected and has not been planned for.

4.7 SIA Methodology

4.7.1 Existing Conditions Phase

The methodology for compiling the existing conditions report included the following research activities:

4.7.1.1 Review Previous Consultation Activities

The SIA team undertook a review of the records of previous consultation activities undertaken by VicRoads, including a briefing by VicRoads engineers and planners. This review included an analysis of key issues; determination of social impacts that would require further investigation; a gap analysis in terms of whether there is sufficient information for the SIA analysis; and a discussion with VicRoads to review the consultation program.

4.7.1.2 Develop Interview Program

The SIA team developed a list of key stakeholders for interview, based on the review of the previous consultation.

4.7.1.3 Existing Conditions Assessment

This assessment included the following tasks:

- A review of local and State government social and planning policy relevant to the study area. The purpose of this review was to identify any strategic development objectives which should be considered in the options assessment process.
- A brief analysis of the social profile of the study area, which included a review of Census data and Council information. The purpose of this task was to profile the local community and identify the scale of impact in terms of population and affected vulnerable groups.
- A review of community services and facilities. The purpose of this task was to identify the key 'attractors' for local movements within and around the study area. This aimed to identify key local access routes and hence which local roads are most important to the local community.
- A review of cultural and social values based on the records from the previous research and existing information on the community of the study area (for example from Council reports and policies).
- A meeting with Council officers to gather information on strategic development objectives and community functioning within the study area.

4.7.1.4 Participation in Consultation Activities

The SIA team participated in consultation activities. This included:

- Attending the landowner information sessions organised by VicRoads.
- Working with the VicRoads community engagement team to develop feedback forms which could be used to inform the SIA and VicRoads' assessment of alignment options.

4.7.2 Participation in VicRoads Engagement Activities

Prior to the EES being announced, VicRoads undertook community consultation to inform the local community about the Project. This is summarised in this section:

- Initial public information session – discussion of issues and constraints
  - Ararat - 7 December 2009
  - Buangor – 8 December 2009
- Public meeting to display draft alignment options
  - Buangor 30 June 2010
- Direct engagement with landowners – on-going once draft alignment options were available.

During the course of the EES investigations, VicRoads held Information Displays in two phases as follows:

- First phase – July 2011:
  - Wednesday 13th 4.00 pm – 7.00 pm Cobb & Co Changing Station Buangor
  - Thursday 14th 4.00 pm – 7.00 pm Great Western Public Hall
  - Saturday 16th 9.00 am – 12.00 pm Beaufort Community Centre
  - Tuesday 19th 4.00pm – 7.00 pm Ararat College
- Second Phase – November 2011
  - Wednesday 9th 4.00 pm – 7.00 pm at Great Western Public Hall
  - Thursday 10th 4.00 pm – 7.00 pm at Cobb & Co Changing Station Buangor
  - Tuesday 15th 4.00 pm – 7.00 pm at Beaufort Community Centre
  - Wednesday 16th 4.00 pm – 7.00 pm at Ararat College.
- Options Assessment Phase – May 2012
  - Tuesday 1st May 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm at Cobb & Co Changing Station Buangor.

The SIA team attended as many of these sessions as possible. During the course of the sessions the SIA team members spoke with many landowners and interested community members, including informal discussions and private interviews.

4.7.3 Impact Assessment

The impact assessment phase included the following activities. Some of these were specific to the SIA and some were undertaken as part of the overall EES investigations and analysis.

- Rapid Assessment of Options to Select a Short list for Further Assessment
  - Participated in the rapid assessment of initial long list of options
  - Provided input to the qualitative assessment criteria.
- Risk Assessment
  - Development of a register of potential social risks of the Project
  - Participation in the risk assessment workshop.
- Assess shortlisted alignment options:
  - Assisted the Project management team with selection of a preferred alignment.
  - Determined the existing conditions for social factors – the no change scenario – against which the base against which other route options were compared.
  - Participated in the options assessment workshop.
- Assessment of the preferred alignment:
  - Stakeholder interviews with Councils, landowners and key community informants to develop a clear understanding of community networks, activities, valued places and community attitudes

towards the Project

- Development of social assessment criteria and assessment of the options against evaluation objectives
- Reporting on the findings of the SIA investigations and assessment of the preferred alignment.

4.8 Assumptions and Limitations

The analysis of existing conditions is chiefly based on secondary data sources such as Council policies and reports, Census data and Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) statistics. The information supplied in this section is based on the assumption that publically available information and secondary data about the study area is correct.

The demographic analysis is largely based on 2006 Census data, which may be somewhat out of date. The 2011 Census data which was available at the time of writing this report has been incorporated into this report. As the population in the study area is relatively stable, it can be assumed that the demographic profile should be a reasonably accurate reflection of the current population.

4.9 Impact and Risk Assessment

This section identifies and describes social impact cause and effect pathways associated with the construction and operation of the Western Highway. The risk assessment is presented in Appendix B.

4.9.1 Impact Pathways and Risk Ratings

The following impact assessment methodology was used to determine the social impact pathways and risk ratings for the Project:

1. Determine the impact pathway (how the Project impacts on a given social value or issue)
2. Describe the consequences of the impact pathway
3. Determine the maximum credible 'consequence level' associated with the impact
4. Table 5 (Page 33) provides guidance criteria for assigning the level of consequence. The method for defining these criteria is described in Section **Error! Reference source not found.**
5. Determine the likelihood of the consequence occurring to the level assigned in step 3. Likelihood descriptors are provided in Table 3; and
6. Use the Consequence Level and Likelihood Level in the Risk Matrix in Table 4 (page 32) to determine the risk rating.

Table 3 Likelihood Guide

Descriptor	Explanation
Almost Certain	The event is expected to occur in most circumstances
Likely	The event will probably occur in most circumstances
Possible	The event could occur
Unlikely	The event could occur but not expected
Rare	The event may occur only in exceptional circumstances

4.9.2 Consequence Criteria

Consequence criteria range on a scale of magnitude from “insignificant” to “catastrophic”. Magnitude was considered a function of the size of the impact: the spatial area affected and expected recovery time of the environmental system. Consequence criteria descriptions indicating a minimal size impact over a local area, and with a recovery time potential within the range of normal variability were considered to be at the negligible end of the scale. Conversely, catastrophic consequence criteria describe scenarios involving a very high magnitude event, affecting a State-wide area, or requiring over a decade to reach functional recovery.

Table 4 Risk Matrix

Likelihood	Consequence Level				
	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Almost Certain	Low	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme
Likely	Low	Medium	High	High	Extreme
Possible	Negligible	Low	Medium	High	High
Unlikely	Negligible	Low	Medium	Medium	High
Rare	Negligible	Negligible	Low	Medium	Medium

Table 5 Social Impacts Consequence Table

Potential Impact	Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Displacement of residents	No displacement of residents created by Project	Displacement of one or two households	Displacement of three to six households	Displacement of households significantly affects a local area	Displacement of households significantly affects a number of local areas
Displacement of businesses	No displacement of businesses by Project	Displacement of businesses with social or economic impacts on a small number of individuals	Displacement of businesses with significant social or economic impacts on part of a local area	Displacement of businesses significantly affects a local area	Displacement of businesses significantly affects a number of local areas
Severance of residents or businesses	No severance of local movement patterns created by Project	Severance of local movement patterns for less than 10 residents or businesses	Severance of local movement patterns of 10 to 20 residents or businesses	Severance of movement patterns significantly affects a local area	Severance of movement patterns significantly affects a number of local areas
Impacts on community facilities and public open space	No noticeable effects created by Project	Effects on facilities with social or economic impacts on a small number of individuals	Effects on facilities with social or economic impacts on a local area	Effects on facilities with significant social or economic impacts on a local area	Effects on facilities with significant social or economic impacts on a number of local areas
Impacts on amenity	No detrimental impacts on amenity	Detrimental impacts on amenity affect a small number of households	Detrimental impacts on amenity affect a local area	Detrimental impacts on amenity significantly affect a local area	Detrimental impacts on amenity significantly affect a number of local areas

* *It is important to note that the consequence levels for different categories of impact listed in the Consequence Table are not comparable between categories and should only be considered for a particular category in isolation. For example, a catastrophic consequence for residential amenity cannot be directly compared to a catastrophic consequence for health and safety.*

5. Existing Conditions

This section sets out an analysis of the existing conditions in the study area. The different cities and towns are reviewed in terms of the role and function in the regional service hierarchy. This assessment was undertaken to develop an understanding of key social attractors and likely movement patterns around the study area. A review of the demographic structure of the community of the study area has also been undertaken.

5.1 Western Highway Corridor

The Western Highway Corridor between Ararat and Stawell is characterised by mostly agricultural land uses. Most of the privately owned land is zoned Farming Zone (FZ) or Rural Living Zone (RLZ). Both of these zones promote low impact, widely dispersed settlement patterns. The purpose of the RLZ is to provide for residential use with high amenity and sustainable land management, whereas the FZ is focussed on maintaining land for agriculture.

Dwellings along the corridor are widely dispersed, except for areas around Great Western and Armstrong. Many rural residential dwellings are set well back from existing roads, with the intention of achieving high amenity. Many of the older farming dwellings are situated close to the existing road, as they were constructed in a time when there was little traffic on the road.

Other land uses near this Western Highway Corridor include:

- Ararat Regional Park – zoned Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)
- Sisters Rocks – zoned Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)
- Black Range - Rural Conservation Zone (RCZ).

The purposes and objectives of these zones are quite different (refer to Appendix A). The PPRZ has a primary focus of providing access to areas for public recreation, whereas the other zones have a primary focus of environmental and resource conservation.

5.2 Local Communities

Section 3 of the Western Highway Project is largely rural in character. The only town in the study area is Great Western. However, at each end of the study area is a regional centre: Stawell at the north-western end and Ararat at the south-eastern end. These towns have been included in the assessment as they are the main service centres for the community of the study area.

5.2.1 Great Western

Great Western is located within the Northern Grampians Shire on the Western Highway about halfway between Ararat and Stawell. The town had a population of 182 in 2006 and 83 dwellings[12]. The population has been slightly higher in some previous years, but has been reasonably stable.

The Community Plan (see Section 3.3.2) says that:

> *Great Western is a charming township located on the Western Highway between Ararat and Stawell in the Northern Grampians Shire, approximately 220 km from Melbourne.*
>
> *First settled in the 1840's by sheep graziers, Great Western rapidly developed through the discovery of gold and then the planting of grape vines.*
>
> *Key buildings throughout the town were constructed between the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century ... The streets were named after prominent British Railway Engineers ... Significant street planting occurred in the 1930s and the sports reserve was established in 1915, followed by the creation of the Memorial Park in 1956.*

The Northern Grampians Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) notes that development of Great Western is restricted by its physical features. The area to the north is flood prone and has poor, rocky soils, which are suitable for viticulture but not suitable for septic waste disposal. The town is bisected by the Western Highway and the main Melbourne-Adelaide rail link. Residential development in the township is currently limited due to the lack of a sewerage system. However, it is noted that the proposed Great Western Sewerage Scheme is expected to be delivered this financial year 2012/2013. Having said this, Great Western is seen to have potential for industrial land use expansion to complement the wineries.

The town is a focal point of one of Australia's internationally renowned wine growing regions (Grampians Wine Region) and is considered to be one of the State's most attractive wine villages. Key wineries in Great Western include:

- Seppelt's Winery and Cellar Door – also famous for its underground "drives"
- Bests Winery and Cellar door - the slab hut of Bests Vineyard is one of the area's historic highlights
- Grampians Estate Winery - Western Highway
- Allanvale Homestead and Shearer's Quarters accommodation and function centre (approximately two kilometres east of the town centre)

The wineries attract around 60,000 visitors per year[3].

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[1] Source: DPCD 'Towns in Time' data tables [http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au].

[2] The 2011 Census data is not yet available at the same level

[3] Source: *Visit Great Western* [http://www.visitgreatwestern.com.au/]

Commercial premises in the town support both the local community, through traffic and tourists. These facilities include:

- Great Western General Store and Post Office
- United Petrol Station
- Salinger's Café
- Toll Gate Studio Gallery
- Great Western Hotel/Motel and two Bed and Breakfast establishments.

Figure 4 Great Western Mechanics Institute Hall

Other places and events of local social value include:

- Great Western Champagne Races - Australia Day weekend, January
- Great Western Vintage Racing Carnival - November
- Great Western Rodeo – Easter
- A Day on the Green winery concerts
- Old Toll Gate - Western Highway
- Great Western Mechanics Institute Hall (Figure 4).
- Historic walking tour which includes the following sites: Best's Winery, the Great Western Primary School, Anglican Church and Common School, Roman Catholic Church, General Store, Great

Western Hotel, Salingers Cafe, Blacksmith Memorial, Gaol and Ploughs, Cemetery, Seppelt's Winery, Racecourse, Methodist and Uniting Church and the Recreation Reserve4.

Figure 5 Bests Bridge across Concongella Creek

Community facilities in Great Western include:

- Three churches:
  - Christ Church Anglican Church (monthly service)
  - St. Columban's Roman Catholic Church (not currently used for services)
  - Methodist and Uniting Church (not currently used for services)
- Great Western Primary School
- The Eric F. H. Thomson Sports Reserve, which has football and netball facilities. The town has a football team which competes in the Horsham and District Football League.

[4] http://www.visitgreatwestern.com.au/attractions.html

Figure 6 Seppelt Winery in Great Western

5.2.2 Ararat

The city of Ararat is the administrative centre of the municipality of the Rural City of Ararat. In 2011 the population was 8,076 (ABS Census). Ararat is a major regional service centre for higher level services such as health and education.

Educational facilities in Ararat include:

- Primary schools: Ararat Primary; Ararat West Primary; Ararat North Primary and St Mary's Catholic Primary School
- Secondary schools: Ararat Community College and Marian College (Catholic high school)
- Regional campuses of the University of Ballarat and Northern Melbourne Institute of TAFE.

Health facilities in Ararat include:

- Ararat & District Hospital (established in 1850), managed by the East Grampians Health Service. The Service provides in-patient and acute hospital services, allied health services, aged care residential services and community services for the residents of the municipality of Ararat.
- Ararat Medical Centre provides general practice medical services to the Ararat community.

Ararat and Stawell have a complementary range of retail services for comparison shopping. In general, the local communities will most often shop at the town they live closest to; however it is apparent that they will visit other towns within the region for specific services or to shop at specific stores. This suggests that access to both major towns in the study area – Ararat and Stawell – is important. During the public information sessions and household interviews, respondents noted that Ballarat is also a key provider of services and shopping destination. People who reside east of Ararat visit Ballarat more often than those who live closer to Stawell.

Places of local and regional social value in Ararat include:

- Ararat Regional Art Gallery and the Ararat Performing Arts Centre, both housed in the former Town Hall
- The Gum San Chinese Heritage Centre, which is focussed on the history of immigrant miners on the goldfields in the mid-1800s
- Former Aradale Mental Hospital (now a TAFE campus), but also open for guided tours
- The J Ward Museum, which explains the early history of the goldfield times and the incarceration of the criminally insane. The Museum is visited by approximately 10,000 people per annum.

Sporting activities and regular festivals in Ararat include:

- Aradale Golf Club on Grano Street
- Ararat Eagles Football and Netball Club
- Mininera Football and Netball Club
- Ararat Football and Netball Club - Wimmera Football League
- Ararat Harness Racing Club has a racetrack in the town
- Ararat Motorcycle Club – Motocross events up to State level
- Ararat Rats - Wimmera Netball Association
- Association Football (soccer) – Ararat and Grampians YMCA school competition from years 8-12.
- Chalambar Golf Club on Golf Links Road
- Golden Gateway Festival (run since 1958)
- Jailhouse Rock Festival (A retro 1950s themed festival running since 1994)
- Wimmera Racing Club (five race meetings a year at Ararat including the Ararat Cup meeting in November.

Ararat is a regional transport hub. The city has rail facilities (for freight and the Overlander inter-state service), but local and regional bus services connect the local community to Ballarat, Melbourne and major regional centres. The city also has an airport.

Ararat is the location of the Hopkins Correctional Centre, which provides accommodation for prisoners with low to medium security protection requirements, including a high proportion of sex offenders (50 per cent) and protection or special needs prisoners (50 per cent)[5]. The prison currently has a capacity of 382 prisoners; however it is currently being expanded to accommodate a new wing containing 350 more beds. Prisoners come from all over the State of Victoria.

5.2.3 Stawell

Stawell is a small regional city and it is the administrative centre of the Shire of Northern Grampians. The town had a population of 6,150 at the 2011 Census. Stawell has an airport and railway station. The Stawell Gold Mine is an operational mine on the eastern side of the town.

Educational facilities in Stawell include:

- Three primary schools – two State and one Catholic
- Stawell Secondary College
- University of Ballarat Stawell Campus.

Health facilities in Stawell include:

- Stawell Regional Health, which provides in-patient and acute hospital services and allied health services for the residents of the municipality of Northern Grampians. The hospital also provides residential aged care and day patient geriatric services. Stawell Regional Health is part of the Grampians Health Alliance, a partnership of four hospital boards with responsibility for the Grampians and Wimmera regions. This substantially increases the catchment of the service.

Places of local and regional social value include:

- Sisters Rocks, which has significant Aboriginal cultural heritage and local social significance (shown in Figure 7)
- Moonlight-cum-Magdala Mine Historic Area
- Central Park
- North Park
- Railway Station Gallery
- Pioneers memorial on Big Hill
- Casper's World In Miniature
- Stawell Gift Hall of Fame Museum
- Bunjil's Shelter in the nearby Black Range.

[5] Source: [http://www.justice.vic.gov.au]

Sporting activities and regular festivals include:

- Grampians Model Train Exhibition and Stawell Sheep Show – July
- Grange Golf Club - Western Highway
- Stawell Football and Netball Club - Wimmera Football League
- Stawell Golf Club – Marnoo Road
- Stawell Harness Racing Club
- Stawell Orchid Show and Stawell Vintage Machinery Rally – September
- Stawell Show – October
- Stawell Swifts Football and Netball Club – Horsham & District Football League
- The Stawell Gift is run each Easter long weekend by the Stawell Athletic Club. This historic event is a major regional tourism attraction which attracts international entrants and spectators from all over Australia
- The Wimmera Racing Club runs four race meetings a year at Stawell including the Stawell Cup meeting in April.

Figure 7 Sisters Rocks near Stawell

5.3 Demographic Analysis

5.3.1 Study Area

Figure 8 shows the Census Collection Districts (CCDs) in the study area. For the purposes of this analysis, the following areas have been assessed:

- Section 3 – Stawell to Ararat
  - 2070807
  - 2070808 (Great Western)
  - 2080202

These areas have been compared against the municipalities and the major towns in the study area, which are Stawell and Ararat.

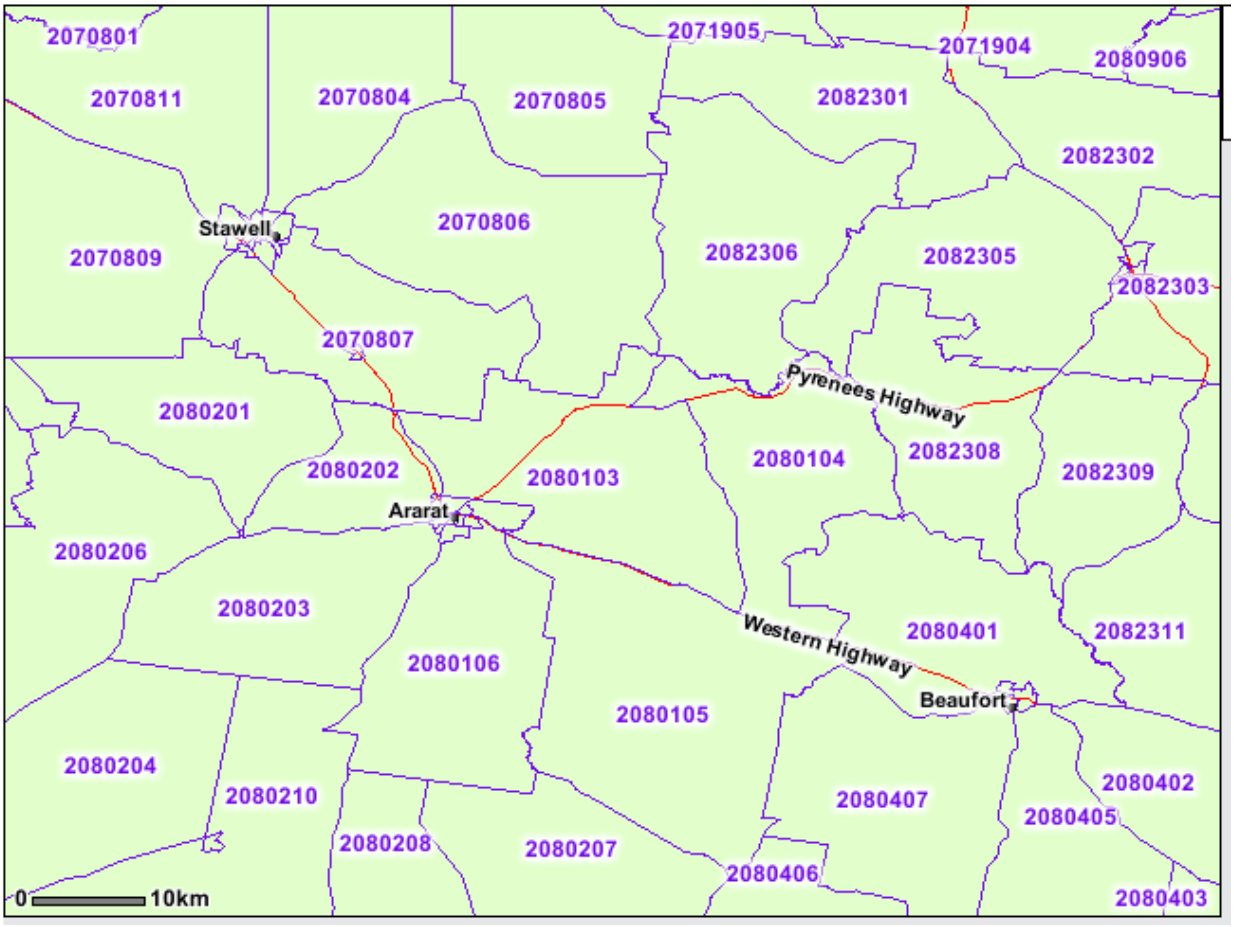

Figure 8 Census Collection District Boundaries 2006

5.3.2 Census Analysis 2006

Table 6 shows the basic population characteristics for the CCDs which encompass the study area. The table shows that rural areas throughout the study area have a relatively similar age profile. This is little different to the general age profile across the municipalities. The main characteristic of the rural areas is that they tend to have a slightly higher proportion of mature adults.

The Census indicates that there is a very small population of five indigenous persons in the study area; however other indigenous persons living in the towns may have a connection to places within the study area. The number of overseas-born residents is very low. This indicates that the population within the study area is culturally homogenous.

The population in the study area is very stable. In most areas, around two-thirds of the population have lived at the same address for more than five years. This indicates a highly connected community with strong social linkages.

Table 6 Population Characteristics 2006

Indicator	Section 3	Ararat township	Stawell township	Ararat Rural City	Northern Grampians Shire
Total persons	1,206	7,170	5,878	11,256	11,911
Age groups:					
0-4 years	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%
5-14 years	15%	13%	13%	13%	14%
15-19 years	7%	6%	7%	6%	7%
20-24 years	3%	5%	4%	4%	4%
25-34 years	8%	11%	11%	10%	9%
35-44 years	15%	14%	14%	13%	14%
45-54 years	18%	14%	13%	15%	15%
55-64 years	15%	13%	12%	14%	14%
65-74 years	8%	9%	9%	10%	9%
75-84 years	4%	8%	8%	7%	7%
85 years and over	0%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Birthplace:					
Australia	1,088	6,330	5,204	9,949	10,564
Elsewhere(a)	73	496	309	783	680
Indigenous persons: Total	5	46	46	82	88
Migration:					
Lived at same address 5 years ago (b)	66%	63%	63%	67%	67%
Lived at different address 5 years ago (b)	34%	37%	37%	33%	33%

(a) Comprises all other places

(b) Excludes persons less than 5 years of age.

Table 7 shows the labour force profile for the various levels in the study area. There is little difference between rural areas and township areas in terms of labour force characteristics. There is a relatively low level of persons with high levels of qualifications in the study area. This is indicative of the low level of advanced and technical professions required in the regional economy. The high level of certificate level qualifications is indicative of trades and service workers.

The Economic Impact Assessment Report (GHD, 2012) notes that agriculture, education and health are all key industries in the region. Tourism and manufacturing are also important to the regional economy. The major agricultural industries are grazing and cropping. Forestry is also common. Vineyards and wineries are scattered throughout the region and are usually small enterprises, apart from Seppelt's in Great Western.

Table 7 Labour Force Characteristics 2006

Indicator	Section 3	Ararat township	Stawell township	Ararat Rural City	Northern Grampians Shire
Persons aged 15 years and over	962	5816	4744	9155	9623
Labour force status(a):					
Employed, worked full-time (b)	59%	56%	58%	59%	59%
Employed, worked part-time	31%	30%	29%	29%	30%
Employed, away from work (c)	7%	6%	7%	6%	6%
Unemployed, looking for work	2%	7%	6%	6%	5%
Total labour force	612	2,923	2,513	5,003	5,433
Not in the labour force	297	2,664	1,973	3,785	3,743
Non-school qualifications (a):					
Postgraduate Degree	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Grad Dip and Grad Certificate	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Bachelor Degree	9%	4%	5%	6%	6%
Advanced Diploma and Diploma	7%	5%	5%	6%	5%
Certificate Level	23%	16%	18%	17%	18%

(a) Applicable to persons aged 15 years and over.

(b) 'Employed, worked full-time' is defined as having worked 35 hours or more in all jobs during the week prior to Census Night.

(c) Comprises employed persons who did not work any hours in the week prior to Census Night and employed persons who did not state their hours worked.

(d) The number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the total labour force.

Further census statistics were assessed as part of the analysis of demographic indicators. For most of the key variables, the number of people was so small in some categories that it was difficult to make a meaningful conclusion about any differences between the rural CDs compared with the other geographical boundaries. With some data, the small number of people in some categories may have enabled identification of the persons involved. For some indicators (such as dwellings), there was little data which could meaningfully support the analysis of social impacts. This is why only a small range of census variables has been presented in this analysis.

5.3.3 Preliminary Census Data – 2011

The first release of data from the 2011 Census became available during the course of the technical investigations. No data is currently available at the same level of detail as used in Section 5.3.2. The only information available for Great Western is based on the geographic level of 'State Suburb'. The 2011 data is summarised in Table 8.

The table indicates that the populations of the towns of Ararat and Stawell have both grown. However, the population in both Local Government Areas has slightly decreased. This suggests that some of the population of other towns and the rural areas of these municipalities has centralised into the larger urban centres. The population of the State Suburb of Great Western was 644 in 2006 and 570 in 2011. This means that there has been a drop in population of 74 over the inter-censal period. This may have been part of the overall trend of centralisation, as the State Suburb boundary includes a large rural zone beyond the township of Great Western (including Armstrong).

Table 8 indicates that the population of Great Western is weighted towards males (53.3%) and slightly older than the local average. Incomes are considerably higher than in general across the two municipalities. While mortgage repayments are relatively high, rental costs are relatively low. There are a high proportion of vehicles per dwelling, however this is to be expected in a rural town.

Table 8 Basic Community Data - 2011

Indicator	Great Western SSC20569	Ararat SSC20024	Stawell SSC21262	Ararat (RC) LGA20260	Northern Grampians (S) LGA25810
People	570	8,076	6,150	11,183	11,845
Male	304	4,133	2,983	5,700	5,909
Female	266	3,943	3,167	5,483	5,936
Median age	45	43	43	45	45
Families	150	2,032	1,618	2,944	3,202
Average children per family	1.7	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9
All private dwellings	275	3,546	2,905	5,192	6,115
Average people per household	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Median weekly household income	$1,021	$851	$824	$844	$815
Median monthly mortgage repayments	$1,094	$1,000	$964	$1,018	$910
Median weekly rent	$100	$165	$145	$150	$140
Average motor vehicles per dwelling	2.3	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.9

5.3.4 Conclusion

The study area for Section 3 of the Western Highway Project is largely agricultural. The only town in the study area, Great Western, is a small rural service centre which mostly exists due to the presence of the two large wineries in the vicinity. Armstrong, a small hamlet west of Ararat, is largely populated by 'lifestyle' residents that work in Ararat but seek a semi-rural lifestyle.

The age profile of the community of the study area is slightly older than average across the municipalities, but in general the rural areas are not significantly different in character to the rest of the municipalities. There is also a mix of lifestyle residents, particularly in proximity to the major towns and around Armstrong. The population of the area is declining slightly.

There is no planning or demographic impetus for the rural areas to become more heavily settled. There is limited likelihood that Great Western would expand significantly in size. This indicates that the demographic profile of the study area is likely to remain similar in character into the future. The only area where any significant change may occur is around Armstrong. This is because the Ararat Council has identified the western end of Ararat, heading towards Armstrong, as being most suitable for any future residential expansion. This means that the area between Armstrong and Ararat may become more densely populated in the future. Council planning officers indicated that Ararat is expanding very slowly, and hence the timing for any growth of Armstrong is of the order of ten years or more.

5.4 Transport Options

5.4.1 Public Transport

School bus services operate along the Western Highway. School bus stop locations change over time in response to changing student enrolments, but are generally on side roads where possible. School bus services are not expected to be affected by the duplication of the Western Highway.

There is no train station in Great Western. The V/Line Melbourne to Nhill bus service passes through Stawell, Great Western and Ararat, with scheduled stops at each of these locations.

Sandlant Bus Services operates a regular passenger service between Stawell and Ararat and also between Stawell and Ballarat. Both services stop in Great Western and Ararat. These bus services will stop at points along the way if requested.

5.4.2 Bicycle Facilities

There are no dedicated on-road bicycle facilities on the Highway, although cyclists could use the sealed shoulders. VicRoads indicate that there is minimal current cyclist activity on this section of the Highway.

The Ararat Greenhouse Action Group have made a request to VicRoads to provide a cycling and walking track as part of the Project. This has been supported by East Grampians Health Service and Joe Helper MP. While VicRoads has indicated that construction of a separate cycling track along the Western Highway is not part of the current Victorian Cycling Strategy, the duplication would be designed with much wider sealed shoulders, which may increase perceptions of safety amongst cyclists, and hence increase cycling activity.

5.4.3 Pedestrian Facilities

There are no pedestrian facilities on the existing Highway. The only part of the Highway that regularly sees pedestrian traffic is the section within Great Western (See Section 3.3.2 for a summary of community attitudes regarding the Highway through the town).

5.4.4 Rest Stops

VicRoads has produced a Rest Area Route Plan for the Western Highway Project. Indicative locations for rest areas have been proposed between Ararat and Stawell; these are subject to review for suitability with the adopted alignment. Refer to the Project Description document for more details.

Great Western currently functions as a rest stop for some travellers.

5.5 Community Attitudes towards the Project

5.5.1 Sources of Data

Information on community attitudes towards the Project has been collected in a variety of ways, including:

- Review of correspondence between VicRoads and local land owners and other stakeholders
- Discussions with VicRoads personnel regarding their interactions with landowners
- Review of feedback forms from the two rounds of community information sessions conducted during the course of the EES studies
- Interviews with a sample of affected residents
- Notes taken by VicRoads at meetings with stakeholder groups.

In many instances the written feedback is in response to specific options which had been presented for comment. Feedback based on options which are no longer being considered has not been included in this report, although it provided input to the risk assessment and options assessment phases of the Project.

5.5.2 Summary of Community Attitudes

Community attitudes have been summarised under a series of themes which were derived from the EES Assessment objectives for social issues (See Section 2.4).

5.5.2.1 Social and community conditions

Many people raised concerns about trucks on the Western Highway. The issues raised include:

- The noise and vibration from trucks, which have an adverse impact on residential amenity.
- Access constraints, mostly related to safety concerns about turning into and out of adjacent properties and side roads with heavy trucks bearing down on them.

There were comments regarding need for further rest stops between Ballarat and Stawell, in particular, rest stops with conveniences for travellers and facilities for truck drivers.

There was a submission from the Ararat Greenhouse Action Group regarding the current lack of cycling facilities, which included a request for cycling lanes to be constructed as part of the duplication Project. VicRoads, in consultation with The Minister for Transport responded to the submission by noting that the road would have shoulders which would be safe for cyclists to ride on.

5.5.2.2 Potential effects on local residents and communities during the construction stage

Much of the landowner feedback focussed on concerns about property-specific impacts. There were many comments on water, including potential impacts on dams, freshwater springs located on the respondent's properties and general water movements. It was stated by several landowners that access to reliable water is crucial for sustainable farming operations. It appears that many current dams are spring-fed, and landowners are concerned that any replacement dams would not have the same reliable water supply.

Several landowners discussed issues related to the length of the planning process, and the impact that this has had on farming operations. This is also a significant issue for people that have purchased rural residential blocks and who are now concerned that the amenity of these blocks would be affected.

5.5.2.3 Potential effects on places with cultural, recreational or aesthetic values

Stawell Golf Club and Caravan Park

There was considerable concern about the impact of the Project on the Stawell Golf Club and Stawell Park Caravan Park. Concerns included:

- That the Golf Club may lose car park spaces, which would affect access.
- Some earlier options included significant access changes to these facilities, which were unwelcome to the owners and managers.
- Uncertainty about a final alignment was causing financial burdens on the Stawell Park Caravan Park development as well as angst amongst the community.
- A suggestion that the duplication be ended at Oddfellows Bridge to avoid any problem with the golf club and caravan park.
- Stawell Resort Caravan Park management were unhappy with the proposed new access arrangement and acquisition of Caravan Park frontage. They stated that they were concerned that the business would cease to be viable and that there would be a reduction of the sale value of the business to land value only. They also indicated that the development may affect a planned residential development (a relocatable home village) on the site. They suggested that this could impact on the number of people attending the Stawell Gift, which may have a negative economic impact for Stawell.

Great Western

Comments about Great Western included:

- Concern that the heritage of Great Western should be protected.
- Concerns about the business impacts of bypassing Great Western, including impact on tourism.
- There was concern that changed access conditions may affect patronage at some wineries. The community want to ensure good signage is developed to encourage tourists to still come into Great Western.
- Great Western – 'wineries, attractive setting and its charm'. … 'Picturesque wine village in-between

two regional centres'.

- Effect on town of railway on one side and freeway on other – would it restrict growth of the town?

Heritage/Cultural Sites and Activities

Specific mention was made of the following:

- Concern was expressed for access at Sisters Rocks Bushland Reserve.
- Comments on heritage value of several different houses, such as the former St Ethel's winery.
- The Stawell Gift. Operation of this historic race requires access to accommodation for attendees.

5.5.2.4 Potential for dislocation, severance of accessibility or reduction of residential amenity (in relation to visual amenity, noise other changes to the character of the area)

Great Western

The western bypass option of Great Western was seen to have a severance impact. Respondents felt that it would make residents to the west more likely to travel to Ararat or Stawell.

One respondent commented that an option closer to town would be better because it may encourage more passing trade and prevent it becoming a 'quiet tumbleweed town'.

It was noted that trucks going to Seppelt's and potentially Bests would still need to enter Great Western, so there would still be some impact from trucks driving through the town.

Best's Winery:

- The owners want to preserve access to two of their best grazing blocks which front the creek. They need to move stock at certain times and the new alignment would mean bringing them back over Bests Rd (bridge over new Highway) which would be unsuitable.
- They expressed interest in the future signage strategy.
- They also expressed concern about moving heavy machinery between their property and other vineyards in the area under freeway conditions.

There was concern from one respondent regarding severance of Hurley's Lane. This may mean that Western View Road would become a dead end, which would be a safety issue when there is an emergency.

Concern was expressed about the potential volume of truck movements on Sandy Creek Road.

Stawell

There was some concern about duplication at London Road, including access to Sisters Rocks and property acquisition. Two respondents indicated that they did not want the road duplicated past London Road.

There was some discussion about the potential future bypassing of Stawell. However, it is noted that a bypass has already been provided at the southern edge of town.

General

There was concern about noise pollution in houses and the possible impact of noise on livestock, particularly breeding mares.

Several respondents noted that their properties had been in their families for multiple generations – some as long as 150 years.

5.5.2.5 Proposed measures to address potential adverse social effects

A public display was held by VicRoads in Great Western on the 14 July 2011. Residents of Great Western and the surrounding areas attended the session to learn about the options for duplication of the Western Highway through their area. Attendees commented on current concerns about the impact of heavy vehicles through the town – including both through traffic and traffic generated by the wineries. The rural character of the area is highly valued, as are the areas of native bushland. The dependence of the local economy on the two major wineries was noted. Good social outcomes would be achieved if amenity in the town could be improved while retaining links to the wineries to encourage visitors.

6. Impact Assessment

6.1 Introduction

The impact assessment has been carried out under several over-arching headings. Each impact assessment category relates back to the EES Scoping Guidelines (Section 2.4), the general SIA indicators described in Section 4.3 and the risk pathways assessed in Table B1. Table 9 shows these links.

Table 9 Impact Assessment Indicators

EES Scoping Requirements	SIA categories	Risk Number	Impact pathway	Impact Assessment Heading
The existing social and community conditions in the vicinity of the Project and relevant alternatives, including the settlement pattern, the distribution of residents in the vicinity of the site, and their demographic characteristics, and patterns of community interaction and social foci.	Community context Policy context	S1	The Project may lead to changes to the existing social and community conditions by creating pressures for the settlement pattern to change.	Section 6.2 Current social and community conditions
		S2/3	The Project may lead to changes to the existing social and community conditions by changing the distribution of residents in the vicinity of the Highway.	
		S4	The Project may change the existing social and community conditions by creating change processes which affect the demographic characteristics of the Study Area.	Section 6.2.4 Changes to the demographic characteristics of the Study Area
Potential effects on local residents and communities during the construction stage.	Amenity impacts Dislocation Individual mobility	S6	The Project may affect local residents and communities during the construction stage.	Section 6.4 Construction Stage Impacts
Potential effects on places with particular cultural, recreational or aesthetic values, particularly with regard to significant regional locations.	Community context Dislocation Access benefits	S5	The Project and changes to access arrangements may lead to changes to the existing social and community conditions by changing patterns of community interaction and use of social foci.	Section 6.5 Valued Places and Spaces
		S7	The Project may lead to effects on places with particular cultural, recreational or aesthetic values, particularly with regard to significant regional locations.	
The potential for residents and communities, or parts of communities in the vicinity of the project, to be affected through dislocation, severance of accessibility or reduction of their amenity (in relation to visual amenity, noise other changes to the character of the area) resulting from development of the proposed Project or relevant alternatives.	Severance Amenity impacts Dislocation Individual mobility	S9	The Project may create a risk of dislocation for individuals and communities.	Section 6.3 Individual and Community Impacts
		S10	The Project may create a risk of severance and accessibility changes for individuals and communities	
		S11/12/13	The Project may create risks of reduction of amenity (in relation to visual amenity, noise other changes to the character of the area) to individuals and communities.	
Proposed measures to address potential adverse social effects, having regard to these, the likely residual effects on local residents and communities.	Policy context			Mitigation See sub-section in each impact assessment category.

Each impact category has been assessed as follows:

- Existing conditions
- Potential effects of the Project
- Potential social impacts of the Project – including social risks
- Benefits and opportunities
- Mitigation measures (construction and operation)
- Overall Assessment of Impact.

6.2 Current Social and Community Conditions

6.2.1 Existing conditions

Section 3 of the Western Highway Project is largely rural in character. The only town in the study area is Great Western. However, at each end of the study area is a regional centre: Stawell at the north-western end and Ararat at the south-eastern end.

Great Western is located within the Northern Grampians Shire on the Western Highway about halfway between Ararat and Stawell. The population of the area declined between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses.

There is no planning or demographic impetus for the rural areas to become more heavily settled. There is limited likelihood that Great Western would expand significantly in size. This indicates that the demographic profile of the study area is likely to remain similar in character into the future. The only area where any significant residential development may occur is between Armstrong and Ararat. The Ararat Rural City Council have identified the western end of Ararat as being most suitable for any future residential expansion.

6.2.2 Pressures on settlement patterns

Potential effects of the Project

The Project may lead to Great Western being perceived as a more desirable location to live, if it cuts travel time between Great Western and Ararat or Stawell, and if the drive is seen as safer and easier by potential residents. This could have the effect of stabilising or even increasing the population of Great Western. However, as noted in Section 5.2.1, there is limited capacity for urban growth due to geographical constraints.

The Project may lead to changes to the existing social and community conditions by creating pressures for the settlement pattern to change. This is most likely to occur if existing properties are broken up into smaller parcels which are unviable as farms, as there could then be pressure for these properties to be rezoned for rural residential purposes.

Potential social impacts of the Project

There is a risk that some rural properties may be severed to a size that is smaller than 40 hectares, which would mean the owners may not obtain a planning approval to build a house. This risk has also been assessed in the Planning and Land Use Impact Assessment Report (Risk PLU3-5). The recommended control is to consolidate small titles of land with adjacent larger farms. However, if this does not happen, there is a possibility that there may be pressure for these parcels may be re-zoned for rural living purposes.

Medium to long term changes to population structure are not generally considered to be an adverse social impact. Given the low and declining population in the study area, it is possible that change generated by the Project would be within the range of normal variation anyway.

The likelihood of the Project leading to an adverse change in settlement patterns is very low. This is because existing planning controls are designed to prevent intensive development in the study area.

Benefits and opportunities

There is an opportunity to plan the township of Great Western to take advantage of the improved amenity and reduced traffic that would result when it is bypassed.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

No mitigation during construction other than measures listed in other impact assessment reports is required.

Change to settlement patterns is a long-term potential outcome of the Project. The appropriate control is the planning scheme and zoning controls.

Council could also consider updating the Great Western Community Plan, which would enable the local community to reflect on the implications of the Project and plan appropriate local responses.

Overall Assessment of Impact

The likelihood of change occurring is almost certain.

The social impact of this change is predicted to be very low.

The residual impact of the Project on settlement patterns is assessed as being a Minor Impact.

6.2.3 Changes to the distribution of residents

Potential effects of the Project

The existing community is in a very low spatial-density distribution and mostly in long-established dwellings. It is unlikely that any residents would specifically move away due to the Project, apart from the residents of the one dwelling that would be acquired (Property 2776).

It is highly unlikely that the Project would lead to significant urban development in the study area.

The Project may negatively affect the Stawell Resort Caravan and Camping Park through land acquisition and amenity effects. This may affect the viability of the caravan park. This could then lead to changes to where tourists stay when they stop in Stawell. As noted in Section 5.5.2, the caravan park management were also concerned about the viability of a proposed residential development (a relocatable home village) on the site. If the proposal does not go ahead because of the Project, then this would affect the distribution of residents in the area. However, the SIA must be based on impacts which are certain to occur; hence the potential impact on this proposal has not been included in the assessment.

It is likely that any future development would be planned to take account of the location of the Project, and this may affect the distribution of residents in the long term. In particular, the Project may encourage more development in Great Western. However, as noted above, this would not be of a scale that would lead to a significant change.

Potential social impacts of the Project

It is unlikely that there would be any loss of residents as a result of the Project. This means that while the Project may lead to a redistribution of residents, it would have a negligible effect on total population, if assessed at the LGA scale.

Benefits and opportunities

There is not predicted to be any specific benefits that can be realised in terms of distribution of residents as a result of the Project. However, in the long term, residents would have certainty about the location and potential impact of the road, and would be able to plan new dwellings accordingly.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

There are no mitigation measures required under this assessment indicator.

Overall Assessment of Impact

The likelihood of change occurring is possible.

The social impact of this change is predicted to be negligible.

The impact of the Project on the distribution of residents is assessed as being a Negligible Impact.

6.2.4 Changes to the demographic characteristics of the Study Area

Potential effects of the Project

The Project could lead to increased demand for properties from people seeking a rural lifestyle, due to decreased travel times from major centres. If this led to population change it would change the demographic characteristics of the community. This may decrease or reverse the recent population loss.

The Project may also lead to demographic change if new people move into the area as a result of properties being severed and later converted for rural residential purposes.

It is expected that changes to demographic characteristics would be incremental and it is highly unlikely that it would lead to changes which would be considered to be significantly negative by the local community. They would only occur as properties were sold and new people moved to the area. It is likely that this would be seen as part of normal change processes.

Some members of the community in Great Western expressed the opinion that more development in the area would be welcomed.

Potential social impacts of the Project

Changes to demographic characteristics are predicted to be small and consequently have a low social impact. This is due to the planning controls and geographic factors that would limit development and hence demographic change. Any new people who move to the area are likely to have similar socio-economic characteristics to the existing population. This is based on conversations with people who have moved into the study area previously. This would also minimise any adverse social impacts.

Benefits and opportunities

Some people may benefit if new properties become available in the area, either in Great Western or for rural residential purposes.

There are no specific benefits or opportunities which need to be managed in terms of this assessment indicator.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

No mitigation during construction is required.

Change to demographic characteristics is a long-term potential outcome of the Project. The appropriate control is the planning scheme and zoning controls.

Council could also consider updating the Great Western Community Plan, which would enable the local community to plan appropriate local responses to capitalise on the improved amenity of the town after it is bypassed.

Overall Assessment of Impact

The likelihood of a small amount of change occurring is almost certain.

The social impact of this change is predicted to be insignificant.

The impact of the Project on demographic characteristics is assessed as being an Insignificant Impact.

6.3 Individual and Community Impacts

6.3.1 Dislocation for individuals and communities

Potential effects of the Project

The Project is not anticipated to cause any community level dislocation. This is because there would be no wide-scale loss of residents or severance from the Project.

Individual and household dislocation occurs as a result of property acquisition, as discussed in Section 4.5.

One dwelling would be acquired in Section 3 (Property 2776). In addition, some landowners would be affected by land acquisition.

Potential social impacts of the Project

The dislocation impact of this Project is at a household, rather than a community, level. It relates to the partial acquisition of some properties, including acquisition of one dwelling, to enable construction of the Project. This may be experienced negatively by some landowners.

Benefits and opportunities

The key opportunity under this indicator is to reduce the dislocation impact as much as possible through good property acquisition processes.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

The planning process to date has been thorough in minimising the number of properties to be acquired as much as possible. The alignment options which had a larger dislocative impact have not been short-listed. It is unlikely that this impact could be mitigated any further, without then either affecting other households or negatively affecting farm viability. It is recognised that the planning process has involved trade-offs between different types of social impact in some locations.

The impacts of property acquisition would be managed in accordance with the *Land Acquisition and Property Compensation Act 1986*.

Overall Assessment of Impact

One dwelling would be acquired in Section 3 (Property 2776).

The social impact of this property acquisition is predicted to be minor.

The impact on social dislocation is assessed as being a Minor Impact.

6.3.2 Severance and accessibility changes for individuals and communities

Potential effects of the Project

The assessment of severance and accessibility changes is based on the analysis contained in the Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Report. A full description of the expected changes is contained in that report.

Road Network Impacts

Most existing access ways would be changed by the Project, particularly at some future time when the Highway would be upgraded to Freeway standard (AMP1). Under the Freeway standard, existing access points from properties on to the Highway would be removed. Some side roads may have restricted access and egress.

The changes to the existing road are detailed in the Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Report. This report is concerned with changes to access; hence the key elements of the alignment that would affect access are summarised here:

During the interim AMP3 upgrade there would be grade-separated interchanges at two locations (Garden Gully Road-Military Bypass Road and Bests Road) with the remainder of intersections being wide median treatments, 'left-in' and 'left-out' access to the Highway or via service roads.

The intersections which would be upgraded to have a wide median treatment include:

- Main Divide Road – The Majors Road
- Petticoat Gully Road (Note access to Old Brewery Road is via this intersection)
- Allanvale Road and
- Churchill Crossing Road.

Additionally, Harvey Lane and Hurst Road would have access to the upgraded Western Highway via a wide median treatment (located between the two roads) and service road connections.

These changes are likely to increase accessibility and perceived road safety for the relevant road users and nearby property owners, and hence are considered to be a positive social outcome.

Within the vicinity of the Great Western Bypass there are several intersecting side roads which currently have direct access to the Highway. This access would be maintained, however Main Street would be downgraded to a local road. Access to the Highway would be via the new interchanges at either end of the town. This access arrangement may increase travel time for some users, however it is expected to be a minor change. The intersecting side roads proposed to have direct access removed include:

- Paxton Street (Sandy Creek Road)
- Cubitt Street
- Rennie Street
- Locke Street and
- Fisher Street.

These changes are expected to be acceptable to the local community. Community perception of the changed access would be enhanced if the Highway through Great Western was modified to become a regional access road. This could be considered as part of revisiting the Great Western Community Plan.

Intersecting side roads without a wide median treatment or alternative access arrangements and properties which currently have direct access onto the Western Highway would be restricted to 'left-in' and 'left-out' access in the initial stage. This is anticipated to increase the travel time for one direction of travel as vehicles would be required to travel along the Western Highway until the nearest wide median intersection treatment or median break. The proposed roads to have 'left-in' and 'left-out' access include:

- Briggs Lane
- Humphrey Lane and
- Panrock Reservoir Road.

While it is unlikely that the users of these roads would be entirely happy about this change, it is likely that they would accept the implicit trade-off in improved safety and better accessibility.

The Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Report concludes that access for intersecting side roads to Western Highway, within the Project area, would generally be retained by the Project. Only minor impacts on connectivity and travel times are anticipated. The report recommends raising awareness of positive Project outcomes resulting from 'left-in / left-out only' treatments and intersection closures through community engagement.

Access to key sites including the Sisters Rocks, the Grange Golf Club and the Stawell Park Caravan Park would be maintained via service roads (AMP-3). Access to the caravan park and golf course may be inconvenient from the east, as visitors may need to travel up to London Road and then double back.

When the road is fully duplicated, it would have sealed shoulders which would be safe for cycling. In many places there would be service roads running parallel to the Highway, which could be used by cyclists. This would make long distance cycling along the Highway much safer and more accessible.

Direct Property Access

Existing direct property accesses to Western Highway would be maintained, however the majority would be restricted to be 'left-in' and 'left-out' under the initial duplicated highway (AMP 3 standard) arrangement. To access those properties from the opposing direction, to the permitted access, vehicles would be required to travel to the nearest wide median treatment or median break and complete a 'U-Turn'.

Due to the 'left-in' and 'left-out' access restriction to the Highway in the initial duplicated highway (AMP 3 standard) arrangement, property owners and visitors may need to travel slightly longer distances than is currently the case to reach their desired destination. The effect may be an increased travel time for those road users with the actual extent depending on the destination of travel. The Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Report states that this increase in travel time is not considered to be an unreasonable change in order to achieve desired road safety benefits.

Potential social impacts of the Project

There is expected to be some localised impacts on travel times for landowners, particularly the owners with property on both sides of the Highway who require farm machinery to move from one side to another. However, overall benefits for road safety and Highway operations would be provided for general users.

Many of the local community members who participated in the community engagement or provided feedback commented that they felt unsafe driving on the existing road. Comments included feeling unsafe with heavy vehicle traffic or being unable to enter or exit side roads or properties safely. It is anticipated that the majority of the community would accept slightly longer travel distances as there would be a trade-off of:

- Potentially reduced travel times due to the improved road conditions;
- Safer driving conditions; and
- Safer access to and from side roads and properties.

Access to community facilities and focal points would not be adversely affected by the Project. Access to the community facilities in Great Western may be improved due to reduce through traffic. In particular, safe pedestrian and cyclist access to the school may be improved.

The proposed changes to access are unlikely to negatively impact on bus routes to the Great Western Primary School. While existing routes may change if access arrangements constrain right-turn movements, there are multiple alternative routes. Any impact needs to be assessed in the context of regular changes to school bus routes which occur anyway, depending on school enrolments.

Any psychological severance impact would be minimal, as changes to existing access pathways are minimal.

Benefits and opportunities

It may become safer for children to walk or ride between dwellings in Great Western and community facilities such as the Primary School and the sports facilities. This would be due to significantly decreased traffic volumes through the town, particularly of heavy vehicles. This would be considered to be a social benefit, due to social health concerns regarding declining childhood activity levels.

Service roads are required for a Freeway Standard road and have been included in the Project developed for assessment in the EES to maintain all property access. Construction of these service roads would improve access for landowners and reduce the uncertainty of future impacts.

As noted in Section 5.5.2, members of the local community have specifically requested upgraded cycling infrastructure. Improved safety and accessibility for cyclists would therefore be a community benefit.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

The mitigation measures recommended to minimise the impact of construction are detailed in the Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Report. These measures address the expected potential social impacts of construction.

VicRoads should continue to liaise with landowners regarding access arrangements, to ensure that driveways and access points are located appropriately.

Council could consider working with the local community to update to the Great Western Community Plan, which could include planning new walking and cycling routes around the town to take advantage of the changed traffic conditions.

Overall Assessment of Impact

There would be a negligible impact on movement patterns for the broader community of the study area.

There would be a minor impact on access for landowners adjacent to the Highway.

There would be a minor impact for the residents of Great Western. While residents of the whole township surrounding areas are affected, the impact is not considered to be negative but rather a change of access arrangements.

The impacts would be certain to occur if the Project proceeds, however any negative impact is off-set by other travel benefits.

The impact of the Project on severance and accessibility is assessed as being a Minor Impact.

6.3.3 Amenity impacts to individuals and communities

Potential effects of the Project

Amenity can be elusive to categorise. When referring to a location, it is usually defined as those characteristics that make it an attractive and agreeable place to be (the 'genus loci'). These characteristics could include the quality of the landscape (urban or rural), the quality of the architecture, the local noise environment (not just the level of noise, but also what is generating the noise – bird song can be just as loud as traffic noise, but is less likely to be perceived negatively) and the lighting environment at night. It may also include air quality, including odours, dust and pollution.

Amenity effects of the Project may come from the following key elements:

- Changes to the road alignment or creation of service roads introducing transport infrastructure to new locations, or aligning it closer to houses than existing.
- Increased traffic noise, if it affects the quality of life of residents living adjacent to the Highway.
- Light from traffic at night, if the road is designed in such a way that lights shine directly on to dwellings.
- Lighting installed by VicRoads, if it is in an area that was previously unlit.
- Removal of existing vegetation and landscaping associated with roadworks, if existing views are changed.
- Changes to the pleasantness of a household's surroundings – for example, by road realignment, tree clearing or changes to the quality of the landscape.
- Changes to the air quality – for example an increase in dust.

Potential social impacts of the Project

Noise

The potential impact of changes to the noise environment is measured in the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Report. The SIA relies on changes to the noise environment as a proxy for changes to residential amenity. It is assumed that any household which has a significant change to the noise environment would also have a significant negative amenity impact.

Table 10 shows the number of properties where there would be a change in the noise environment. The table shows the anticipated difference in noise levels between 2011 (existing conditions) and 2026. It is important to understand that some degree of change to the existing noise environment would have occurred for many properties regardless of whether the road was duplicated or not, due to increased traffic volumes.

Table 10 Comparison of Changes to the Noise Environment between 2011 and 2026

Change level	Number	Per cent
Houses where noise levels would be reduced by 10 db (A) or more	21	8.8%
Houses where noise levels would be reduced by 1-9 db (A)a	22	9.2%
Houses which would have no change in noise levels	22	9.2%
Houses where sound levels would increase by up to 3 dB(A)	93	38.8%
Houses where sound levels would increase by between 3 dB (A) and 4 dB(A)	53	22.1%
Houses where sound levels would increase between 5-9 dB(A)	16	6.7%
Houses which would have a sound increase of 10 db(A) or more	12	5.0%
Houses to be acquired	1	0.4%
Total	**240**	**100%**

Source: Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment, GHD, 2012

The Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment report makes the following comments regarding changes to the noise environment:

> *Section 3 of the Western Highway Project has the potential to improve (reduce) noise levels at the following locations due to the preferred option moving away from sensitive receivers:*

- *Great Western Township;*
- *Some Houses around Harvey Lane; and*
- *Some Houses on Robson Road;*

> *The Project also has the potential to worsen (increase) noise levels at the following locations due to the preferred option moving closer to sensitive receivers:*

- *Residential dwellings currently situated further from the existing Highway which would become closer to traffic noise due to the proposed alignment, such as those dwellings situated on the north-eastern outskirts of Great Western Township and those houses southeast of Robson Road.*

The number of houses which would have a high increase in noise levels (5+ db (A)) is 28, or 11.7% of the total number of houses in the study area. This is a high negative impact. The number of houses where there would be a very high decrease in noise levels (10 db (A)) is 21, or 8.8% of the total. These do not cancel each other out. While the number of houses which would have an improved noise environment is a significant benefit of the Project, the number of houses that would be negatively impacted is high and this is likely to be of high community concern.

In accordance with the Traffic Noise Reduction Policy (VicRoads, 2005), noise attenuation measures may be recommended to mitigate traffic noise in certain circumstances.

Visual Impact

The key findings of the Visual Impact Assessment which are of relevance to the SIA are summarised below:

- Impact on Residents: Where the duplication occurs adjacent to the existing Highway, an adjacent duplication would typically have a low impact upon the amenity of the adjacent residents. Dwellings located adjacent to new overpasses and the Great Western Bypass would have a higher visual impact as the duplication would insert new carriageways and bridges in new areas. The effects can be reduced with appropriate mitigation.
- Impact on Townships and Cultural and Natural Values: The duplication is expected to have an insignificant visual impact upon the Great Western town centre and other places of natural and cultural value. However, the visual impact upon outer Great Western and Sisters Rocks would be comparably higher. Non-standard mitigation, comprising of screening vegetation and the sensitive design of road infrastructure is recommended.
- Impact on Landscape Character Areas: The key areas where the landscape character is likely to be diminished include the Great Western Bypass, and where new road interventions such as overpasses and ramps are constructed. The impact may be reduced through careful non-standard mitigation.

Benefits and opportunities

As noted in Table 10, the residents of 43 dwellings would experience a decrease in ambient noise levels compared with existing noise levels, over the period to 2026. This means that this section of the community would benefit from an enhanced amenity.

Mitigation works to reduce negative impacts on landscape may have the effect of increasing the attractiveness of the landscape for local people and commuters. If this occurs, it would be a social benefit of the Project. VicRoads has the opportunity to enhance the travelling experience for all commuters through the design of landscaping.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

For this indicator, the mitigation measures are those recommended by the relevant technical specialists. No further mitigation measures have been identified in this investigation.

Overall Assessment of Impact

The likelihood of the impact on amenity is certain if the Project proceeds, and it would affect a high proportion of the households within the study area. A particular concern is the high number of houses (12) where the noise level would increase by 10 db (A) or more. It is acknowledged that part of the increase in noise in some locations would occur independently of the Project due to increased traffic volumes.

The overall social impact on amenity is classified as Moderate Impact. While there are a large number of households that would experience a change of varying degrees, they are concentrated in one local area, around Great Western township and more specifically around the new Bypass.

6.4 Construction Stage Impacts

The main disruptive effect of a major infrastructure project is often experienced at the construction phase by the local community. It is at this point that many of the negative access and amenity effects occur. Disruption may continue for months or even years. With a road construction project, there are three areas of impact:

- The presence of the construction workforce, which includes the following aspects:
  - Presence of a temporary workforce (most likely to be resident in Ararat and Stawell)
  - Movement of the workforce to and from work sites during the day
  - Location of facilities for the workforce, including site offices, amenities blocks and car parks
- When construction is occurring directly out the front of a dwelling or farming property, with noise, dust and access impacts; and
- When driving along the Highway is affected by road closures, detours, lane closures and reduced speed limits.

The workforce directly employed on the Project is estimated to be no more than 200, and is more likely to be between 50-100 people at any given time. The workforce is likely to include local people as well as people who are only in the area to work on the Project. A proportion of the workforce is likely to move directly from construction of Section 2 (Beaufort to Ararat) to construction of Section 3, depending on project timing.

In general, most members of the community would accept the temporary inconvenience of construction activities, with the understanding that it would provide them with a future benefit. The level of acceptance varies depending on the level of perceived future personal benefit. In the case of the Western Highway Project, most adjacent landowners would see themselves as direct beneficiaries of the Project, in reduced travel times and improved safety, if nothing else. This is likely to lead to a greater acceptance of construction impacts, as long as the community has confidence that VicRoads and their contractors are managing the construction appropriately and effectively.

Potential social impacts of the Project

The potential social impacts of construction include:

- Disruption from the presence of the construction workforce – most likely to be caused by their

movements to and from construction sites;

- Reduced amenity for adjacent residents from construction activities, including: increased traffic noise, dust visual impact; and
- Property access interruptions during construction.

Locations along the proposed alignment where this may occur are those where construction activities are carried out in close proximity to dwellings, or where they disrupt access. The sites of highest sensitivity are around Armstrong, Great Western and Monaghan Road, Stawell (near the Stawell Park Caravan Park and Grange Golf Course).

As there is a wide variety of accommodation options in Ararat and Stawell, it is considered unlikely that the presence of the temporary construction workforce would adversely affect accommodation availability in either of these towns.

Benefits and opportunities

There are no specific social benefits or opportunities for this indicator, apart from those which flow on from the economic stimulus caused by the presence of the construction workforce.

VicRoads could consider working with the contractor to engage with the students of Great Western Primary School to provide educational opportunities for the school students to learn about major project construction and environmental management. This would also have the benefit of educating the children about safety around work sites and would provide a public relations opportunity for the contractor. This could be undertaken in conjunction with similar activities at Buangor Primary School (Section 2) to further enrich the experience for the children.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

The social impacts of construction would be managed through the controls included in VicRoads construction contract conditions and the additional measures recommended in the Noise, Air and Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Reports. In addition, the construction contractor should be required to locate site office and lay-down areas away from sensitive locations.

VicRoads would require the construction contractor to develop and implement a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) for the Project. VicRoads standard environmental protection measures and some additional Project specific controls would be incorporated into the Environmental Management Framework for the Project, which is documented in the Project Environment Protection Strategy (PEPS). The PEPS is a VicRoads Document that details the environmental management arrangements for the design, construction and operation of the Project. VicRoads would require the construction contractor to incorporate all of these measures into the CEMP. Refer to Chapter 21 of the EES for further explanation of the environmental management framework and documentation proposed for the Project

VicRoads could also consider requiring the construction contractor to ensure that their workforce adheres to an appropriate code of conduct. This would specifically relate to any temporary workers and would aim to prevent conflict with the local community.

Overall Assessment of Impact

The level of disruption is likely to be high for an extended duration. For this reason, the social impact is assessed as a Moderate Impact.

This is not considered to be a longer term negative impact, rather it is an acknowledgement that many people would be affected by construction, however this would be offset by the future benefit that they would receive when it is completed.

6.5 Valued Places and Spaces

6.5.1 Existing Conditions

Key community facilities, tourist attractions, cultural and heritage places which have visual, aesthetic or landscape value are listed below:

- Recreational areas and facilities including Stawell Resort Caravan and Camping Park, Grange Golf Club, Great Western Memorial Park, Great Western Racecourse.
- Scenic areas including the Sisters Rocks, Sisters Rocks Bushland Reserve, Great Western Bushland Reserve, Ararat Regional Park, including the Ararat Hills Block with McKays Circuit and Woodfines Track and Ararat Hills Scenic lookout.
- Community facilities including the Great Western Primary School.
- Tourist facilities such as Best's Winery, Seppelt's Winery and Grampians Estate Wine Centre.
- Locally historic buildings in Great Western, including the Great Western Mechanics Institute Hall; several churches, the Great Western Primary School and some of the retail premises.

6.5.2 Patterns of community interaction and use of social foci

Potential effects of the Project

The major locations for social interaction within the study area are:

- The Sisters Rocks - Stawell
- The Grange Golf Club - Stawell
- Great Western Mechanics Institute Hall – Great Western
- Eric F. H. Thomson Sports Reserve – Great Western
- Christ Church Anglican Church – Great Western.

While access to all of these facilities would be changed by the Project, this is unlikely to significantly affect patterns of community interaction. There would be no major severance of access, and for this reason it is likely that existing patterns would continue.

Potential social impacts of the Project

There is significant concern from the Grange Golf Club management regarding the effects of the Project on accessibility to the Golf Club. However, the proposed alignment and design maintains access to this facility, albeit with changed access arrangements.

No significantly negative social impacts are anticipated as a result of this Project.

Benefits and opportunities

There may be some social benefit in Great Western from reduced traffic through the town, if it enables social network activity to increase.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

VicRoads could continue liaison with the management of the Grange Golf Club to ensure that the best design for access to this facility is selected.

6.5.3 Effects on valued places

Potential effects of the Project

Access to sites in Great Western may be slightly changed for people coming into the town, but there would be minimal difference within the town.

Access to Seppelt's Winery and Best's Winery would be changed, as travellers would need to make a conscious decision to leave the new road and enter Great Western. This may affect casual visitation to these facilities. Access to other sites within Great Western would only be minimally changed.

Access to the Sisters Rocks, the Stawell Park Caravan Park and Grange Golf Club would be changed, but there would be no effect on the actual facilities. It is unlikely that there would be any decrease in the use of these sites as a result of the Project, as these are all destination sites. A minor change in access arrangements is unlikely to affect travel intentions.

Potential social impacts of the Project

There was some local concern regarding heritage impacts, some of which were connected to concerns about the impact of bypassing Great Western on winery visitation.

There was also some local concern regarding on-going access to the Sisters Rocks. There are two conflicting issues with Sisters Rocks –the indigenous cultural heritage of the site and the more recent local heritage of the site as a place where local youth congregate and 'make their mark'.

Benefits and opportunities

It is unlikely that the Project in this locality would have a negative effect on access to, and use of, valued community facilities. It is more likely that removing through traffic through the town of Great Western would be seen as a social benefit from the Project, as it would enable easier movement around the town and hence to places of local social value.

Mitigation measures (construction and operation)

Consultation with Council and the local community has been undertaken during the planning for the Project to determine access requirements.

The Northern Grampians Shire Council may wish to undertake a management plan for the Sisters Rocks. Given the importance of the site for the local community, a balance must be struck between preservation and accessibility, so that the site can remain a focus of social activity.

VicRoads, tourism bodies and Council could develop a signage strategy that encourages travellers to visit the wineries in the area.

Overall Assessment of Impact

There would be no negative social impact in terms of reduced access to valued places and social foci.

There would be some potential for social benefit in terms of improved access to these sites and improved amenity of the sites in Great Western.

There would be no negative social impact in terms of effect on valued places.

The social impact of access to valued places and social foci is assessed as Insignificant Impact.

7. Conclusion

The Project has been designed so as to avoid or minimise impacts on individuals and communities wherever possible. The draft evaluation objective in the EES Scoping Requirement relevant to the Social Impact Assessment is:

- *To protect residents' wellbeing and minimise any dislocation of residents or severance of communities, to the extent practicable.*

An existing conditions assessment was undertaken and included a review of relevant State and local government social and planning policies, an analysis of the social profile of the study area, a review of community services, facilities and cultural and social values, and a meeting with Council officers to gather information on strategic development objectives and community functioning within the study area.

The SIA team participated in consultation activities including attending the landholder information sessions to speak with landowners and interested community members and conducting individual landholder meetings with people that would be impacted by the Project.

The SIA process found that community attitudes towards the Project were mixed with concerns raised about potential amenity impacts, including an increase in noise levels and impacts on visual amenity. Concerns were also raised about potential property acquisition, severance of agricultural land and changes in access arrangements to local properties. Particular concerns included effects on the Sisters Rocks, the Stawell Park Caravan Park and the Grange Golf Club, and for dwellings affected by alignment changes.

The Risk and Impact Assessment was undertaken to identify and assess the potential social impacts that could arise from the Project. This was conducted under four categories which include relevant indicators to measure the potential social impacts. The assessment is summarised in Table 11.

Table 11 Summary of Social Impact Assessment

EES Requirement	Indicator	Impact Assessment
Existing social and community conditions	Pressures on settlement patterns	Minor
	Changes to the distribution of residents	Negligible
	Changes to the demographic characteristics of the Study Area	Insignificant
Individual and Community Impacts	Dislocation for individuals and communities	Minor
	Severance and accessibility changes for individuals and communities	Minor
	Amenity impacts to individuals and communities	Moderate
Construction Stage Impacts	Amenity impacts to individuals and communities Disruptions to access	Moderate
Valued Places and Spaces	Patterns of community interaction and use of social foci	Insignificant
	Effects on valued places	Insignificant

Overall, the social impacts of the Project would be low. However, there are two impacts that are considered to be of moderate social impact. These are:

- Amenity impacts to individuals and communities during the operation and construction of the Project
- Disruption to access during construction.

8. References

Ararat Rural City Council 2005 **Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2005-2006**, Ararat Rural City Council, Ararat

Ararat Rural City Council 2009 **Ararat Rural City Council Plan incorporating the Strategic Resource Plan 2009 – 2013**, Ararat Rural City Council, Ararat

Ararat Rural City Council 2009 **Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009 – 2013**, Ararat Rural City Council, Ararat

Northern Grampians Shire 2008 **Arts & Cultural Strategy 2008-2012**, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Stawell

Northern Grampians Shire 2009 **Council Plan 2009 / 2013**, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Stawell

Northern Grampians Shire 2009 **Great Western Community Plan 2009- 2013**, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Stawell

Northern Grampians Shire 2009 **Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-2013**, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Stawell

Northern Grampians Shire 2010 **Strategic Resource Plan 2010 -2014**, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Stawell

Northern Grampians Shire 2011 **Community Access Plan 2011 to 2014**, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Stawell

VicRoads 2010 **Project Options Assessment Report: Western Highway Project –Ararat to Stawell** VicRoads Ballarat

Appendix A

Planning Zone Definitions

Northern Grampians Planning Scheme[6]

[6] The definitions and purpose of the zones are identical across all planning schemes.

Rural Living Zone

Purpose:

- To provide for residential use in a rural environment.
- To provide for agricultural land uses which do not adversely affect the amenity of surrounding land uses.
- To protect and enhance the natural resources, biodiversity and landscape and heritage values of the area.
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.

Farming Zone

Purpose:

- To provide for the use of land for agriculture.
- To encourage the retention of productive agricultural land.
- To ensure that non-agricultural uses, particularly dwellings, do not adversely affect the use of land for agriculture.
- To encourage use and development of land based on comprehensive and sustainable land management practices and infrastructure provision.
- To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.

Public Conservation and Resource Zone (PCRZ)

Purpose:

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To protect and conserve the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, scientific, landscape, habitat or cultural values
- To provide facilities which assist in public education and interpretation of the natural environment with minimal degradation of the natural environment or natural processes.
- To provide for appropriate resource based uses.

Public Park and Recreation Zone (PPRZ)

Purpose:

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To recognise areas for public recreation and open space.
- To protect and conserve areas of significance where appropriate.
- To provide for commercial uses where appropriate.

Rural Conservation Zone

Purpose:

- To implement the State Planning Policy Framework and the Local Planning Policy Framework, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and local planning policies.
- To conserve the values specified in the schedule to this zone.
- To protect and enhance the natural environment and natural processes for their historic, archaeological and scientific interest, landscape, faunal habitat and cultural values.
- To protect and enhance natural resources and the biodiversity of the area.
- To encourage development and use of land which is consistent with sustainable land management and land capability practices, and which takes into account the conservation values and environmental sensitivity of the locality.
- To provide for agricultural use consistent with the conservation of environmental and landscape values of the area.
- To conserve and enhance the cultural significance and character of open rural and scenic non-urban landscapes.

Appendix B

Risk Assessments

Risk No.	Impact Pathway Description	Description of consequences	Planned Controls to Manage Risk	Initial Risk			Additional Controls Recommended to Reduce Risk	Residual Risk		
				Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating
S1	The Project may lead to changes to the existing social and community conditions by creating pressures for the settlement pattern to change.	Travel time changes from Stawell and Ararat, which may make it seem a more desirable location for residential development. If there is increased development pressure, this may have flow-on effects in the delivery of infrastructure and community services.	This is controlled by the planning scheme.	Insignificant	Almost Certain	Low	No additional control is necessary for VicRoads.	Insignificant	Almost Certain	Low
S2	The Project may lead to changes to the existing social and community conditions by changing the distribution of residents in the vicinity of the Highway.	As per S1: there are several rural properties around Great Western which would be cut up by the Project. If the land between the new alignment and the existing township was re-zoned for rural residential or township purposes, this may increase the population in the vicinity of the project. Along the balance of Section Three the alignment is relatively close to the existing highway: this is likely to minimise the number of new households living in close proximity to the road.	This is controlled by the planning scheme.	Insignificant	Almost Certain	Low	No additional control is necessary for VicRoads.	Insignificant	Almost Certain	Low
S3	The Project may change the existing social and community conditions by creating change processes which affect the demographic characteristics of the Study Area.	S1 and S2 may lead to long-term changes to the demographic character of Great Western. It is unlikely that the balance of Section Three would create any major demographic change processes.	This is controlled by the planning scheme.	Insignificant	Possible	Negligible	This is controlled by the planning scheme.	Insignificant	Possible	Negligible

Risk No.	Impact Pathway Description	Description of consequences	Planned Controls to Manage Risk	Initial Risk			Additional Controls Recommended to Reduce Risk	Residual Risk		
				Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating
S4	The Project and changes to access arrangements may lead to changes to the existing social and community conditions by changing patterns of community interaction and use of social foci.	The major locations for social interaction within the study area are: - The Sisters Rocks - Stawell - The Grange Golf Club - Stawell - Great Western Mechanics Institute Hall – Great Western - Eric F. H. Thomson Sports Reserve – Great Western - Christ Church Anglican Church – Great Western. While access to all of these facilities would be changed by the Project, this is unlikely to significantly affect patterns of community interaction. There would be no major severance of access, and for this reason it is likely that existing patterns will continue.	Consultation with Council and the local community has been undertaken during the planning for this project to determine access requirements. Access arranges will change, however it will be maintained to significant locations such as the Sisters Rocks.	Insignificant	Possible	Negligible	There is significant concern from the Grange Golf Club management regarding the effects of the Project on accessibility to the Golf Club. VicRoads could continue liaison with the management of the Grange Golf Club to ensure that the best design for access to this facility is selected.	Insignificant	Possible	Negligible

Risk No.	Impact Pathway Description	Description of consequences	Planned Controls to Manage Risk	Initial Risk			Additional Controls Recommended to Reduce Risk	Residual Risk		
				Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating
S5	The Project may affect local residents and communities during the construction stage.	The potential social impacts of construction include: - Disruption from the presence of the construction workforce – most likely to be caused by their movements to and from construction sites - Reduced amenity for adjacent residents from construction activities, including: increased traffic noise, dust visual impact and - Property access interruptions during construction. Locations along the project route where this may occur are those where construction activities are carried out in close proximity to dwellings, or where they disrupt access. The sites of highest sensitivity are around Armstrong, Great Western and Monaghan Road, Stawell (near the caravan park and golf course).	Construction Management controls described in VicRoads Contract Shell DC1 document. This includes relevant Air Quality, Geology (Contamination), Noise, and Traffic controls described in Risks A1, G1, G2, N3, T1. The CEMP will have protocols for liaising with adjacent land owners, to keep them fully informed about construction activities in their area, and any potential disruption to their access and amenity.	Minor	Likely	Medium	The social impacts of construction would be managed through the controls included in VicRoads construction contract conditions and the additional measures recommended in the Noise, Air and Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Reports. In addition, the construction contractor should be required to locate site office and lay-down areas away from sensitive locations.	Minor	Likely	Medium

Risk No.	Impact Pathway Description	Description of consequences	Planned Controls to Manage Risk	Initial Risk			Additional Controls Recommended to Reduce Risk	Residual Risk		
				Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating
S6	The Project may lead to effects on places with particular cultural, recreational or aesthetic values, particularly with regard to significant regional locations.	Access to sites in Great Western may be slightly changed for people coming into the town, but there would be minimal difference within the town. Access to Seppelt's Winery and Best's Winery would be changed, as travellers would need to make a conscious decision to leave the new road and enter Great Western. This may affect casual visitation to these facilities. Access to other sites within Great Western would only be minimally changed. Access to the Sisters Rocks, the Stawell Park Caravan Park and Grange Golf Club would be changed, but there would be no effect on the actual facilities. It is unlikely that there would be any decrease in the use of these sites as a result of the Project, as these are all destination sites. A minor change in access arrangements is unlikely to affect travel intentions.	Consultation with Council, local community and indigenous community has been undertaken during the planning for this project to idenitify significant places and how to reduce potential impacts. Community interactions such as community liaison, publicity and community issue resolution would be in accordance with Section 1210 of the VicRoads DC1 contract specification.	Insignificant	Possible	Negligible	The Northern Grampians Shire Council may wish to undertake a management plan for the Sisters Rocks. Given the importance of the site for the local community, a balance must be struck between preservation and accessibility, so that the site can remain a focus of social activity. VicRoads, tourism bodies and Council could develop a signage strategy that encourages travellers to visit the wineries in the area.	Insignificant	Possible	Negligible
S7	The Project may create a risk of dislocation for individuals and communities.	The dwelling on Property No. 2776 will be acquired.		Minor	Unlikely	Low	Note that mitigating amenity impacts (S9) may lead to dwelling acquisition in a few instances.	Insignificant	Unlikely	Negligible

Risk No.	Impact Pathway Description	Description of consequences	Planned Controls to Manage Risk	Initial Risk			Additional Controls Recommended to Reduce Risk	Residual Risk		
				Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating
S8	The Project may create a risk of severance and accessibility changes for individuals and communities.	Most existing access ways would be changed by the Project, particularly at some future time when the Highway would be upgraded to Freeway standard (AMP1). Under the Freeway standard, existing access points from properties on to the Highway would be removed. Some side roads may have restricted access and egress. Access into and around Great Western will be changed. The effects of the changes will be both positive and negative: many residents will experience slightly longer travel times, but will have safer and easier access to their properties and side roads. There will be minimal severance resulting from the Project. Accessibility in Great Western may improve as traffic volumes will decrease.	Service roads have been identified and included in the concept design developed for the project. Refer to the Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Report.	Minor	Almost Certain	Medium	The mitigation measures recommended to minimise the impact of construction are detailed in the Traffic and Transport Impact Assessment Report. These measures address the expected potential social impacts of construction. VicRoads should continue to liaise with landowners regarding access arrangements, to ensure that driveways and access points are located appropriately. Council could consider working with the local community to update to the Great Western Community Plan, which could include planning new walking and cycling routes around the town to take advantage of the changed traffic conditions.	Minor	Likely	Medium

Risk No.	Impact Pathway Description	Description of consequences	Planned Controls to Manage Risk	Initial Risk			Additional Controls Recommended to Reduce Risk	Residual Risk		
				Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating		Consequence	Likelihood	Risk Rating
S9	The Project may create risks of reduction of amenity (in relation to visual amenity, noise other changes to the character of the area) to individuals and communities.	Houses left close to the ROW are located at Ch. 4500 (south), 4900 (south), 5300 (south), 5800 (north), 10600, 21900 (north). The proximity varies. Some of these dwellings are extremely close to the Project alignment and there would be significant amenity impacts. Refer to Section 6.3.3 of the SIA for a detailed discussion of amenity impacts.	To mitigate visual amenity impacts, VicRoads will develop a landscape plan to vegetate the road reserve following construction. The design and species selection will be sympathetic to the existing landscape values of the project area. The Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Report documents the changes in the noise environment in the project study area. The number of houses which would have a high increase in noise levels (5+ db (A)) is 28, or 11.7% of the total number of houses in the study area. This is a high negative impact.	Moderate	Likely	High	Impacts to be further managed through landscaping and detailed design. Noise mitigation may be required in some circumstances as per the Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Report.	Minor	Unlikely	Low

GHD

180 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne, Victoria 3000
T: (03) 8687 8000 F: (03) 8687 8111 E: melmail@ghd.com.au

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Rev No.	Author	Reviewer		Approved for Issue		
		Name	Signature	Name	Signature	Date
0	R. Davies	M.Tansley		M.Tansley		15.11.12