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PRESS RELEASE

Staging Plan to Progress Regional Road Freight Strategy

Individual freight routes being upgraded under a regional strategy to improve road freight safety and productivity have been announced with the release of the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network Staging Plan today.

The joint project of 42 Local Governments across the region has been further enhanced by \$93 million additional funding from State and Federal Governments to enable the second stage of the program to be developed as outlined in the Staging Plan.

The additional \$80 million combined with the previously committed \$70m brings the total Federal Government project contribution to \$150 million, and the \$13 million contribution from the State brings \$37.5 million the amount committed by Western Australian Government and Local Governments.

Steering Committee Chair Cr Katrina Crute said the total project funding will enable upgrade of 950 km of the highest priority routes over the next six years.

“This will deliver real economic benefits through lower freight costs, increasing international competitiveness and improving road safety,” Cr Crute said.

“This project has only been able to proceed thanks to financial support from the Commonwealth Government through the Roads of Strategic Importance initiative and JobMaker Plan and the Western Australian Government.”

“Local Governments in the region are on target to deliver upgrades to 15 of the 54 routes included in the overall plan as shown in the Staging Plan.”

“We will continue to engage with Federal and State Governments, seeking funding in the future for Stages 3, 4 and 5 of this transformational project.”

Planning for the Wheatbelt Secondary Freight Network project began in October 2014 with a commitment from 42 Local Governments to work together to improve freight routes across the network. This makes it the largest known collaboration between Local Governments in Australia. Although the first routes to be upgraded do not cross into every Local Government area, the group remains committed to achieving benefits throughout the region.

Cr Crute thanked the Federal and State Government, State and Federal Ministers for their ongoing support and commitment to the project.

“Projects like this require input from a variety of stakeholders to ensure their success over the long term, there are many people in the State and Federal Governments who have helped us get to this point, and the 42 Local Governments are very grateful”

The Steering Committee acknowledged WALGA, Main Roads WA, Regional Development Australia Wheatbelt, Wheatbelt Development Commission, The Shire of Kulin and the Shire of Koorda for their continued support of this project through the provision of administrative support and guidance.