13 August 2003

Request for Commonwealth funding to protect World War 2 Airstrip

The Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, Kon Vatskalis, today told Parliament he has written to the Commonwealth Government requesting additional National Highway funding to protect a World War 2 airstrip on the Stuart Highway.

Mr Vatskalis said the old Strauss Airstrip just south of Noonamah would be affected under plans to readjust the Stuart Highway.

"As part of the National Highway program, plans are in place for the duplication of the Stuart Highway between Noonamah and Cox Peninsula Road," Mr Vatskalis said.

"This project would involve six kilometres of the highway on the western side of the existing road, and would affect approximately half of the 1.2 kilometre Strauss Airstrip."

Mr Vatskalis said he has written to Federal Transport Minister John Anderson requesting the Commonwealth consider a variation to the project to realign the planned road so it avoids the airstrip.

This would see a $1.3 million increase to the estimated $3.5 million cost of the project.

"What we are requesting the Commonwealth to do is realign the duplication so it takes in the eastern side of the highway instead.

"This would involve the relocation of trunk services such as water mains and optical fibre cables as well as land acquisition.

"The old Strauss Airstrip was an important World War 2 runway, and a piece of Territory and Australian history we should try and protect.

"I hope the Commonwealth takes this into account and provides the extra funding to the Territory to allow the preservation of the airstrip."