



Red lights and traffic jams are not the only problems facing Adelaide motorists.

metro malcontent – the “20-minute city” no more



Adelaide once had the enviable reputation as Australia’s “20-minute city”, which meant motorists could access the central business district (CBD) from all parts of the metropolitan area and expect most journeys to fall within a convenient 20-minute timeframe.

With many roads on Adelaide’s strategic metropolitan network, particularly those running north-south, now offering motorists unsatisfactory levels of service

based on nationally accepted standards, that title is no longer deserved.

But traffic jams and red lights are not the only problems facing Adelaide motorists today. Another major area of concern for the RAA is the lack of a systematic maintenance regime for many of our metropolitan roads. Many arterial and busier secondary roads have well and truly reached their use-by date and are showing advanced stages of disrepair.

Motorists are forced to negotiate around crumbling road surfaces, search for faded line markings and dodge potholes on a daily basis, and this state of disrepair has become the rule instead of the exception.

For nearly 20 years, the RAA has conducted travel-time surveys on roads in Adelaide’s “north-south corridor”, such as South, Goodwood, Unley and Marion roads, and the results have shown a pronounced deterioration in travelling conditions during peak periods.

As a result, drivers are spending increasingly more time crawling along at average speeds of less than 30km/h or are left stationary waiting for heavily trafficked intersections to clear. Surveys have shown that these roads are nearing or already at capacity, with motorists now resorting to surrounding local roads as a means to avoid congested locations.

Conditions on these roads during off-peak times are also congested, due mainly to the presence of parked vehicles. While these problems can be partially addressed by extending clearway hours and providing more off-street parking, they are unpopular remedies with business owners and more permanent solutions are needed.

The construction of proposed tunnels on South Road under Grange and Port roads and an underpass at Anzac Highway were welcome announcements, but more is needed to move traffic efficiently along the north-south corridor.



Traffic build-up approaching the notorious Britannia Roundabout.

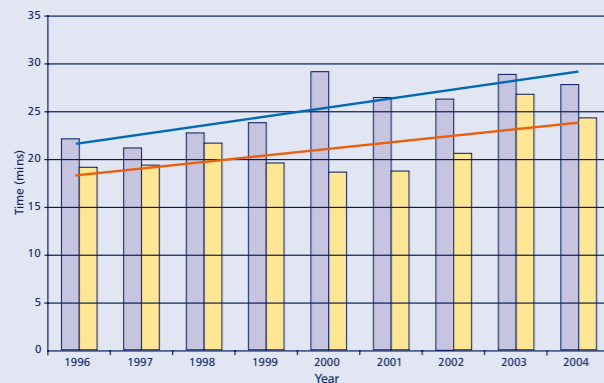
AusLink is more than just ensuring efficient access to the Port of Adelaide and the airport. The AusLink metropolitan network must be expanded to recognise the freight and commuter requirements on South Road between Sir Donald Bradman Drive and the Southern Expressway. At present, only South Road north of Sir Donald Bradman Drive is on the network.

South Road (south of Sir Donald Bradman Drive) carries between 30,000 and 60,000 vehicles per day,²⁶ with about 10 per cent of daily traffic volumes being commercial vehicles.²⁴ It services light to medium-heavy industry in the north-south corridor, including car manufacturing, associated vehicle component manufacturers and dozens of other manufacturing businesses that remain reliant on South Road to move freight.

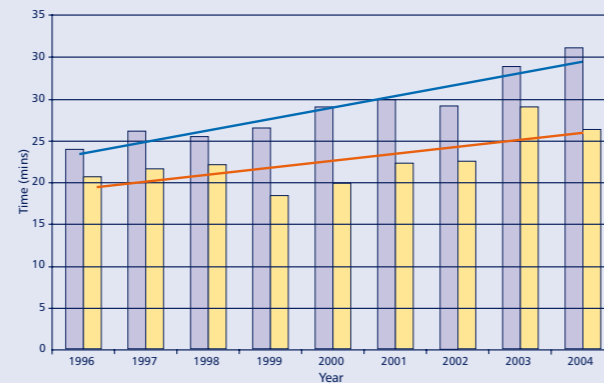
This section of South Road also plays an important role in moving commuter traffic to and from the CBD, as well as to and from destinations along the north-south corridor. It is clearly apparent that it fails this task on a daily basis, operating at or near capacity for much of the time.

It is a glaring omission to not have this section of South Road on the AusLink network. Adelaide is an elongated city that stretches some 80kms on a north-south axis to the west of the CBD — along which is located the bulk of industrial development and the expanding northern and southern suburbs. To not have an efficient, high standard north-south road facility in the corridor remains a fundamental transport planning flaw for South Australia.

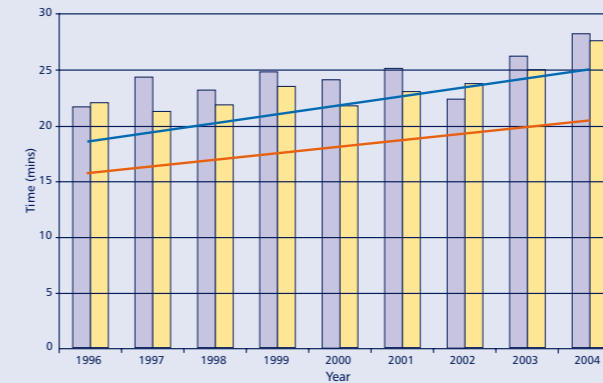
Travel times for South Road/Anzac Highway
From Seacombe Rd, Sturt, to West Tce, Adelaide



Travel times for Ayliffes Road/Fiveash Drive/Goodwood Road
From South Rd, Clovelly Park to South Tce, Adelaide



Travel times for Belair Road/Unley Road
From Main Rd, Blackwood to South Tce, Adelaide





REVITALISING THE NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR

The options by State Government for improving traffic flow in the north-south corridor primarily focus on South Road, reinforced by recent announcements to construct tunnels on South Road under Port and Grange Roads, and an underpass at the intersection with Anzac Highway.

The RAA believes these tunnels should extend to the Anzac Highway underpass - a distance of some six kilometres and ten times the length of the proposed tunnels. In addition to the tunnel, all major intersections along South Road north of the tunnel to the Port River Expressway must be grade separated, through the construction of overpasses or underpasses at intersections with:

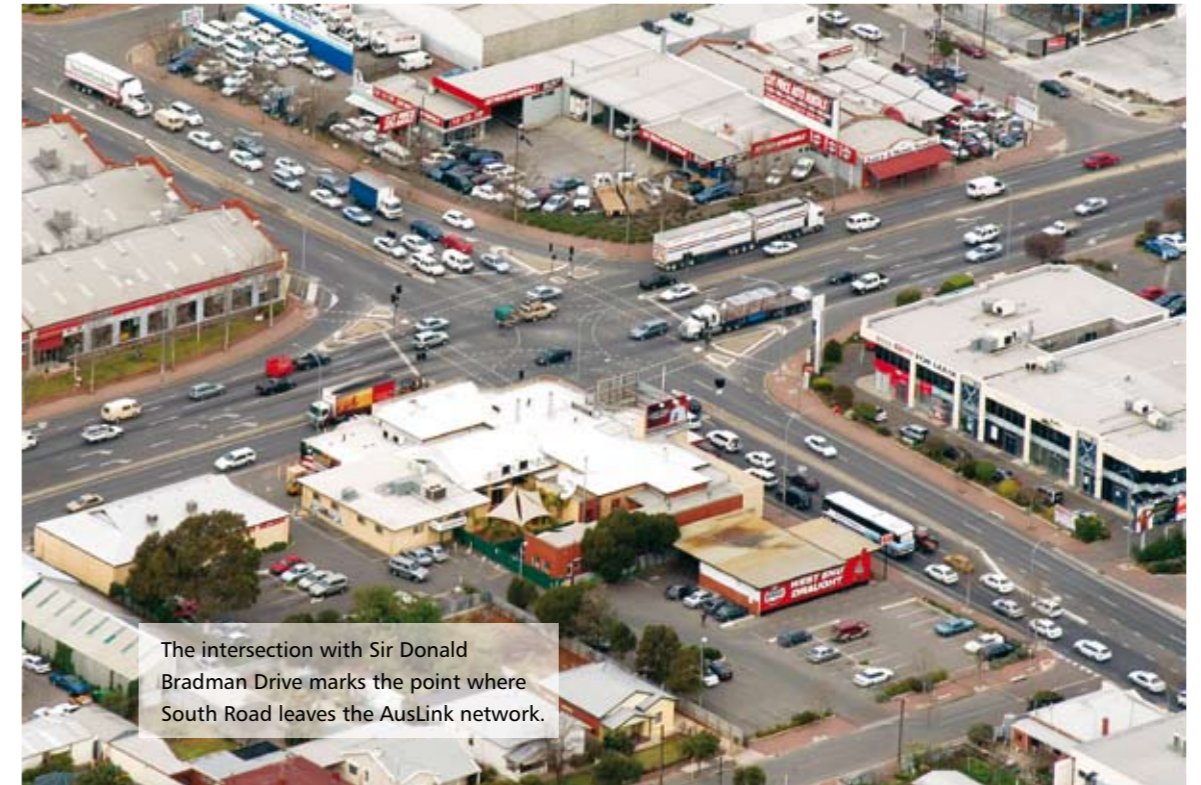
- Torrens Road
- Regency Road
- Grand Junction Road.

Similarly, an overpass or underpass needs to be provided at the following intersections with South Road, south of the tunnel:

- Daws Road
- Ayliffes Road
- Sturt Road.



Red light district — South Road traffic building up at an intersection.



The intersection with Sir Donald Bradman Drive marks the point where South Road leaves the AusLink network.

To complete the provision of unrestricted traffic flow along the route, the rail level crossing north of Cormack Road, Wingfield and the Glenelg tram level crossing north of Anzac Highway, also need to be grade separated.

These improvements will ease increasing pressure on South Road, as well as surrounding arterial roads such as Marion and Goodwood Roads. These roads would not only become less congested, but also result in significant environmental and amenity benefits for the affected region — particularly at ground level above the tunnel.

To complete the effective revitalisation of the north-south corridor, the Southern Expressway (Stages 1 and 2) must be duplicated. Only when this and other projects advocated along this major transport corridor become reality can South Australia claim to have an efficient north-south arterial road servicing Adelaide's highest traffic demand.

MORE MISSING LINKS

Another strategically important link in the Adelaide metropolitan road system that warrants inclusion onto the AusLink National Network is the Glen Osmond Road, Greenhill Road, Richmond Road link.

There exists significant freight movement along this link — a primary prerequisite for inclusion on the AusLink network. The journey of heavy vehicle traffic into the inner metropolitan area begins from the Adelaide-Crafrers Highway (largely ex-Melbourne) and heads for destinations on or near South Road between Richmond Road and Grand Junction Road.

Research indicates that Portrush Road and Glen Osmond Road carry the same volume of commercial vehicles at 5.5 per cent, with only a slight difference in the total number of commercial vehicles: 1,600 and 1,400, respectively.²⁴ This indicates that commercial vehicle traffic from the South Eastern Freeway splits almost 50/50 between Glen Osmond Road and Portrush Road — with a small fraction of commercial vehicles opting to use Cross Road.

NORTH-SOUTH CORRIDOR RATING: **2/10**

MISSING LINKS RATING: **4/10**



Britannia Corner – congested and needlessly confusing to motorists

inner ring route

To date, there has been no truly efficient ring route of Adelaide constructed to divert non-essential traffic away from the central business district.

The so-called 'inner ring route' has comprised Fullarton Road, Dequetteville Terrace, Robe Terrace, Park Terrace, Port Road, East Terrace, the new Western City Bypass and Greenhill Road.

However, this is not a ring route by the strict definition because a 'ring' or inter-connecting route is not actually formed. As such, the route fails to provide ease of access for traffic wanting to travel from one side of the CBD to destinations on the other side.

Some travel paths, such as travelling from the north and north-east to the western suburbs are

reasonably well catered for by using Robe Terrace and Park Terrace to access roads like Port Road and Grange Road. Other trips, such as those taken by southern and western suburbs motorists bound for east and south-east of the city suffer because of poor connectivity to Greenhill Road, the poor quality of East Terrace, and the ongoing Britannia roundabout nightmare.

BRITANNIA CORNER

For more than 50 years the roundabout at the Britannia corner has grabbed headlines. When it was first constructed back in the 1950s, strategically placed sandbags were used to help traffic negotiate the location and it had a centrepiece of more than 60 44-gallon drums.



The Britannia solution in the 1950s — how much has truly changed?

While the sandbags and drums have long gone, the design of the intersection has not greatly advanced over time. Today, this location holds the illustrious reputation as one of Adelaide's worst crash spots and continues to leave bureaucrats scratching their heads for a solution.

Recent plans to redevelop the roundabout and construct two highly coordinated sets of traffic lights were put on hold after an environmental impact statement highlighted that a number of park lands trees would need to be removed.

While the RAA acknowledged that the removal of significant numbers of native trees was unacceptable, the (abandoned) proposal remained technically sound. Earlier investigations by government into the proposal indicated that the environmental impact on neighbouring park lands would be within tolerances, but it has been a slap in the face to motorists to later learn that this advice was incorrect and that no resolution is on the horizon.

The current Jurassic layout of this roundabout is the weakest link of the inner ring route and must be addressed as a matter of priority.

EAST TERRACE

East Terrace between the Bakewell Bridge (Henley Beach Road) and Port Road is a narrow, ill-defined, hazardous road link — even though it is part of the inner ring route.

Despite plans to replace the Bakewell Bridge with a road underpass, the recent completion of the City West Connector, and current work to widen



James Congdon Drive, there have been no plans approved to upgrade East Terrace and it remains the weak link.

This situation must be addressed in order to gain maximum value from these road improvements and the recent upgrading of Robe Terrace — in other words to make the ring route and the City West Connector truly functional and attractive to road users.

GREENHILL ROAD

Gone are the days when drivers could rely on getting a good run along Greenhill Road, particularly at peak times. Only by including Greenhill Road, between Glen Osmond Road and Anzac Highway, on the AusLink network will it be assured that this problem is addressed.

INNER RING ROUTE RATING:

4/10





The busy Gepps Cross Intersection, viewed from Port Wakefield Road.

The Adelaide metropolitan area 'outer' ring route is less defined than the inner ring route.

It is essentially the freight route to the east of the City, connecting the Adelaide-Crafers Highway and Main North Road/Port Wakefield Road at Gepps Cross. The route (from south to north) incorporates Portrush Road, Ascot Avenue, Hampstead Road and Grand Junction Road, and is part of the AusLink national network.

PORTRUSH, GLEN OSMOND AND CROSS ROADS AND THE ADELAIDE-CRAFERS HIGHWAY INTERSECTION

This intersection is the gateway to Adelaide from Melbourne.

Approximately 3,000 commercial vehicles converge on this intersection daily,²⁴ with slightly more than half dispersing down Portrush Road.



Heavy vehicles joining the Adelaide-Crafers Highway.

Most of the remainder travel down Glen Osmond Road. This situation will worsen markedly given forecast increases in road freight over the next 15 or so years.

Lengthy delays at the intersection are a constant source of annoyance, and fears that an out-of-control commercial vehicle on the Adelaide-Crafers Highway will cause widespread damage at this location are ever-present.

Plans must be made to build an overpass at this intersection to streamline traffic movement and improve safety conditions.

GEPPTS CROSS INTERSECTION

This intersection regularly creates frustration among drivers in peak and other times because of the sheer volume of traffic that needs to share precious time assigned by the traffic signals controlling five roads.

Grade separation, probably involving Main North Road passing over Grand Junction Road, is needed. It is acknowledged that the new Northern Expressway will take pressure off Main North Road through Elizabeth, but there will remain five heavily trafficked roads converging at Gepps Cross that cannot be efficiently managed by traffic signals.

OUTER RING ROUTE RATING: 5/10



Computer simulation of a proposed underpass on South Road.

the cost of getting back on track



SOUTH ROAD

The 'big ticket item' in the RAA's vision for improvements to Adelaide's metropolitan road system is the proposed six-kilometre-long South Road tunnel between West Hindmarsh and Kurralta Park.

Based on estimates within the State Infrastructure Plan for a much shorter tunnel under Grange and Port Roads, the cost of the envisaged longer tunnel is estimated to be in excess of \$1 billion. By South Australian standards, this is a huge investment in public infrastructure, and when combined with the costs of grade separation projects at key intersections along South Road as proposed by the RAA, total expenditure on this project is likely to be somewhere between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion.

South Australia is not accustomed to expenditure of this magnitude on road projects. However, it is time thinking on this issue changed. Investing in a more efficient north-south transportation corridor is crucial to the prosperity of the State.

SOUTHERN EXPRESSWAY

Duplication of the Southern Expressway is estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$250 million.

As when the expressway was built, the duplication could be in two stages commencing with Stage One, to capitalise on the proposed upgrading of South Road through to Bedford Park.

RING ROUTES

Upgrading the Britannia intersection and building overpasses at the Gepps Cross and Glen Osmond intersections are the highest-cost improvements required on Adelaide's metropolitan ring routes.

A long-term solution for Britannia is likely to cost approximately \$40 million. This has been branded prohibitive in the past, but needs to be put into perspective. The cost of constructing an overpass at Gepps Cross, a similar bottleneck, is about \$45 million. Therefore, a \$35-\$45 million solution at Britannia must be regarded as good value for money.

Upgrading East Terrace at Mile End so that the road is wider and better defined is a relatively low cost project, and estimated to be in the vicinity of \$8 million.

GLEN OSMOND, GREENHILL AND RICHMOND ROADS

Investment necessary to improve the efficient movement of traffic on these roads will depend on whether the Federal Government agrees to incorporate them on the AusLink Network. For now, the RAA's efforts will be directed at achieving this objective, rather than estimating the cost of improvements on this route.

A bird's eye view of the Southern Expressway.



going public



South Australian motorists have been told that the State cannot afford to build its way out of trouble and that the only meaningful way to ease congestion along arterial roads is to heavily invest in public transport and make improvements to transport technology.

South Australia must have a strong government with an ability to plan beyond its term of office, and commit to the introduction of a sustainable transport system. The RAA has recognised that an efficient public transport network is an inherent and vital part of an integrated transport system.

Such a system would allow people to make transport choices away from private motor vehicles where convenient, and would provide an essential community service for a percentage of the population that does not have access to private vehicles.

However, the RAA has argued that a balanced perspective is vital to effectively respond to rising congestion levels.

Significant investments in public transport and other non-car modes are unlikely to make an equally significant impact, given 79 per cent of

travel is by car, compared to only 4.6 per cent by public transport.

The extension of the Glenelg tram line through the City and possibly beyond to North Adelaide, is a good example of how a large investment in public transport does not necessarily equate to improved conditions on the road system.

Extending the tram line from Victoria Square to North Terrace will cost \$21 million, yet patronage is not expected to increase dramatically. All that will happen within the city is that existing bus passengers will switch to the tram. The North Adelaide line extension, for an additional \$30 million, may be attractive for workers in the area who live south of the precinct, but there are not huge numbers in this category.

While the RAA encourages the use of public transport, this project is poor value for money, money that would be better spent on other public transport improvements and improvements to the metropolitan road network. It is evident that the family car will remain the mode of choice for most for the foreseeable future.