



# Duke's double up

By **Joanne Fosdike**

THE State Government has whipped out its latest pre-election promise, this time putting a blueprint for South Australia's transport future on the table.

The idea of a plan was rejected at the beginning of the year, but the Government has since decided to put together a 30-year plan that encompasses major projects at a cost of \$36 billion.

Among the promises are major infrastructure upgrades for the Mallee, including a duplication of the Dukes Highway between Tailem Bend and Keith, road widening of the Mallee Highway, Princes Highway, Loxton to Pinnaroo Road and the Pinnaroo to Bordertown Road.

There is also a provision for double-stacking on the Adelaide to Melbourne rail line, and replacement of ferries along the river.

But no time table has been set for the roll-out of the plan.

Premier Jay Weatherill said the plan was about improving quality of life while ensuring support for tourism and business, and suggested people should get involved during the consultation period.

"Improved roads and the continued rollout of replacement ferries will make it easier and safer for locals and visitors to travel around the region, while ensuring we can support growth in tourism and business," he said.

Mr Weatherill described the blue-

print as the most sophisticated and detailed transport plan ever undertaken in the State, but members of the Opposition disagree.

Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick said he was surprised to find the Dukes Highway on the Government's plan.

"If they have been planning to duplicate the Dukes then why have they just spent \$80m of Federal funding and \$20m of State money to do recent upgrades that could have gone to better use?" he asked.

"It is ludicrous - we want it doubled but what gives?"

Deputy State Liberal Leader Vickie Chapman said her party had already announced a 36-year plan which, unlike the Government plan, had the added benefit of requiring achievable short term goals.

She said if the Liberal Government won next year's State election they would set up Infrastructure SA within 12 months of taking office.

Ms Chapman said it would be the job of Infrastructure SA to oversee their transport plan rather than leaving most decisions in the hands of politicians.

"Within 12 months Infrastructure SA would have to come up with the initial five-year plan," she said.

"You need a plan, you can't have a tick-a-box system as people need to know when they can expect something to be done."

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**On the road:** Deputy State Liberal Leader Vickie Chapman has a look at the state of the region's roads with Member for Hammond Adrian Pederick during a visit on Monday.

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"The Government's project is a tick-a-box project.

"It is like they've gone through the Department of Transport's list of things that need to be done and put them on a big list and made an announcement."

Ms Chapman said her biggest concern about the Government's proposal was a lack of transparency when it came to funding.

"What concerns me is the Premier said 80 per cent of projects are budgeted for in the forward estimates," she said.

"That means there is no provision just a guess-timation."

Ms Chapman said many of the projects in the Government's Integrated Transport and Land Use Plan had already been announced, budgeted and abandoned.

"We were amazed when the Gawler electrification was canned as it was already started," she said.

Other projects previously announced and later scrapped by the Government include a \$140 million underpass for South and Sturt roads, \$75m for a Southern Expressway interchange and \$520m for trams to the western suburbs.