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**REASONS FOR DECISION UNDER *ENVIRONMENT EFFECTS ACT 1978***

**Proposal: Second Murray River Crossing at Echuca-Moama (Mid-West 2 Corridor)**

**Proponent:** VicRoads

**Description of Project:**

The project involves the construction and operation of the Victorian component of a second Murray River road bridge crossing at Echuca-Moama on one of two alignment options (2A or 2B) within an area termed the ‘Mid-West 2 Corridor’ (MW2). The project includes crossings across both the Murray and Campaspe Rivers, together with an elevated roadway and extensive bridging across the floodplains, as well as improvements to existing approach roads.

VicRoads intends to stage construction, with the initial phase planned as a two-lane two-directional roadway and a single bridge across each waterway, with a further stage to be completed once the first stage reaches capacity (likely to be upwards of 30 years) to bring the project to its ultimate form of a 4-lane divided roadway with two bridges across each waterway.

**Decision:**

The Minister for Planning has decided that an Environment Effects Statement (EES) is required for the proposal, as described in the referral accepted on 13 February 2013.

**Reasons for decision:**

* Development of either Option 2A or Option 2B would involve the potential for significant effects on native vegetation and associated biodiversity values, Aboriginal cultural heritage, passive recreation values in Victoria Park, as well as the landscape values, floodplain function and geomorphic stability of proximate sections of the lower Campaspe River and the Murray River.
* An EES would provide a robust and transparent framework within which to assess and evaluate the most suitable alignment for a second crossing of the Murray River at Echuca-Moama, building upon investigations to date of options within the MW2 corridor as well as nearby alternative alignments.

**Date of Decision:** 14 June 2013