

Roadworks boost for local economy

THE ALine East contract for the upgrading of the road from Tammin to Walgoolan is set to prove a boost to the Merredin economy.

The roadwork program when completed will leave Merredin with a sophisticated water desalination system.

All the water for the roadworks from Tammin to Walgoolan will come from Merredin bores that go into saline groundwater.

This water will be bought from the Merredin Shire and stored before going through a reverse osmosis desalination process.

Merredin Shire Council chief executive officer Frank Ludovico said the proposal is an excellent one for the Shire.

"I think being able to use the groundwater underneath Merredin for the ALine East project, whether it's saline or desalinated, is a fantastic outcome," he said.

"It means the groundwater gets reduced below town, it's used for worthwhile projects, it shows people that there are opportunities out there for this sort of water and we're hoping that this could be a model that other towns could use.

"We can only see win-win in all of this for the council and the community and for ALine East."

Additionally, the company bought the Potts Motor Inn for \$1.7 million last year to accommodate its staff.

Already, 20 people have been accommodated, with the possibility of up to 50 people being housed there.

The company is also considering leasing four houses in the Merredin town site for management.

As a further boost, Aline East has undertaken to use wherever possible materials available locally and local contractors.

Gravel is one of the materials that will be sourced locally.

The new roadworks have caused the road reserve to be widened and farm land resumed.

Main Roads is currently having this land valued for compensation purposes and will also replace fencing on new boundaries.

Approximately 20 metres of land will be taken in for the acquisition for road widening.

Currently the construction is working on nine kilometres between Hines Hill and Merredin.

ALine East Alliance manager Mark Sutton said that most of the roadwork construction will be in confined areas up to five kilometres at a time, causing a maximum five minutes' delay.

The widening of the road will allow safer width and proper drainage.

Additionally, the roadworks will incorporate overlaying, realigning and balancing environmental and safety issues.

"Safety is the primary reason for upgrading the road," Mr Sutton said.

To facilitate traffic movement on the road, the company is also taking down the "reduce speed" signs at the end of each day.

BOOSTING: Aline East Alliance manager Mark Sutton and Aline East environmental and community relations manager Kylie Brierty examine the first area of roadworks which will boost the Merredin economy. **For the full story see Page 3.**

