



**NEWSLETTER June 2011**

**South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc.**

# HSR study due soon



*High speed rail could mean Sydney to Newcastle in 40 minutes, Sydney to the Gold Coast in 2.5 hours, and Sydney to Melbourne in three hours.*  
*Photo courtesy Infrastructure Australia.*

The first stage of a strategic study for a high speed rail (HSR) network for the east coast, Melbourne to Brisbane via Newcastle-Sydney-Canberra, is due with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport next month. The Department's HSR General Manager Richard Farmer outlined the project's brief to last month's SEATS meeting.

This two-stage study, by a consortium led by AECOM Australia and commissioned by the Federal Government, will determine the economic benefits and financial viability of the staged long term development of an HSR network.

Transport and Infrastructure Minister Anthony Albanese has said the Government sees this study as vital to Australia's long term infrastructure planning with HSR potentially providing a stimulus to economic development.

HSR is primarily used for passenger transport, with travel speeds now routinely greater than 300kph, on dedicated purpose-built continuous welded tracks to allow for greater speeds, and with electric overhead lines to drive the system.

The first stage of the strategic study will de-

termine possible station and corridor options, main design decisions and requirements, and high level construction costs.

The second stage, to follow soon after and due mid 2012, will identify the optimum route alignment, identify potential patronage levels, develop more robust cost estimates, and investigate financing options.

Mr Albanese said the completed study will provide the basis for informed public debate on whether HSR is an appropriate response to Australia's future transport needs.

A recent but separate study by AECOM and Infrastructure Partnerships Australia identified the need to reserve high capacity infrastructure corridors early on. These would take HSR, telecommunications and communication cables. One of two corridor options identified in that study for the Sydney to Melbourne HSR route is via the La Trobe Valley. The other is via Albury-Wodonga.

That AECOM-Infrastructure Partnerships corridor study suggested HSR development should be

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## SDH intermodal opens

The Southern Distribution Hub (SDH) has appointed Colliers International to market its new intermodal near Goulburn.

SDH director Bob Stephen says it forms part of 'the infrastructure jigsaw' now in place on the Sydney-Canberra corridor. Its location, he says, makes it Australia's only true intermodal.

The new integrated warehousing, industrial, logistics, service and distribution hub has an approved nett build area of 1.5 million sq m on 263 ha, 4 km south of Goulburn. It will operate 24/7.

Colliers' Senior Executive Industrial Adrian Balderstone told SEATS that strategically SDH's location is ideal — adjacent to both the Hume Highway (a B-double and B-Triple approved route) and Goulburn Airport, and on the Great Southern rail line with direct links to Port Kembla and Port Botany. It is well placed to move freight between Sydney, Melbourne, Canberra, Wollongong and south eastern NSW.

Apart from Goulburn's outstanding suitability for an intermodal, he said its advantages include the scarcity of prime 10,000 sq m warehouse space in Sydney and its competitive price.

SDH director Bob Stephens said the Hub's take up rate is expected to be 10 to 15 years. It would then be valued at over \$1 billion and support directly over 2,500 new jobs.

### Princes Hwy upgrade near Narooma

Seymour Whyte Constructions has been awarded the \$45 million contract to upgrade 3.2 km of the Princes Highway at Victoria Creek, 13 km south of Narooma.

Work includes removing a number of tight bends, building a new bridge, and providing an overtaking lane in both directions. Funded by the NSW Government, construction is expected to start soon and be completed in 2013.

### HSR continued from page 1

incremental, progressively building out from areas of higher population densities with the Newcastle-Sydney spine the network's core element.

That study also concluded HSR could provide an opportunity to:

- accommodate growth without radical changes to the density of capital cities;
- stimulate regional development;
- answer the increasingly challenging social issue of affordable housing.;
- significantly reduce carbon emissions;
- potentially reduce demand on Australia's airports and therefore the need for a second Sydney airport.

## SEATS Chairman speaks...

We had a great meeting in Goulburn recently; it was one of our best attended and presentations were both well researched and well received.

The High Speed Rail Project is extremely important to planning Australia's future transport strategy, so it was fascinating to listen to a presentation by Richard Farmer, General Manager of the Project with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport. (See page 1)

The new SDH intermodal at Goulburn is also a most interesting project. It is positioned well on the main freight transport links between Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra and will create a lot of additional warehousing space. It will also create significant employment opportunities in our SEATS region.

We visited Coles' impressive Regional Distribution Centre. This is an immense project where Coles and Linfox Transport distribute product throughout southeastern NSW and out to the Dubbo and Narromine region.

It was also good to learn from timber and forestry industry representatives of their transport infrastructure concerns. South East Fibre Exports' Peter Rutherford and Forests NSW's Marty Linehan outlined the South East Truck Safety Committee's work to ensure better conditions for the industry's transport workers. It complements much of SEATS work and we hope to forge a permanent relationship with them.

Members were updated on what our State Advocacy Committees will be doing. This will be extremely important as we continue to discuss our priority projects with government departments in Victoria, NSW and Canberra. They will report on their progress at each SEATS meeting.

It was also wonderful to learn that Warren Sharpe, Eurobodalla Shire Council's Director of Roads and a member of SEATS Executive, was awarded the prestigious Engineer of the Year Award by the NSW Institute of Professional Works Engineers last month.

Congratulations to Warren and his team. SEATS' work is well promoted by Warren in all he does.

SEATS continues to grow attracting members from industry as well as local government. It is also good to see the keen interest taken by government in what we are undertaking.

Cr Sue Whelan  
Chairman



# Coles' Goulburn RDC impresses

The scale of Coles' Regional Distribution Centre (RDC) at Goulburn was impressive enough, but what SEATS delegates also found fascinating during their recent visit was the inventory control across Coles' entire network.

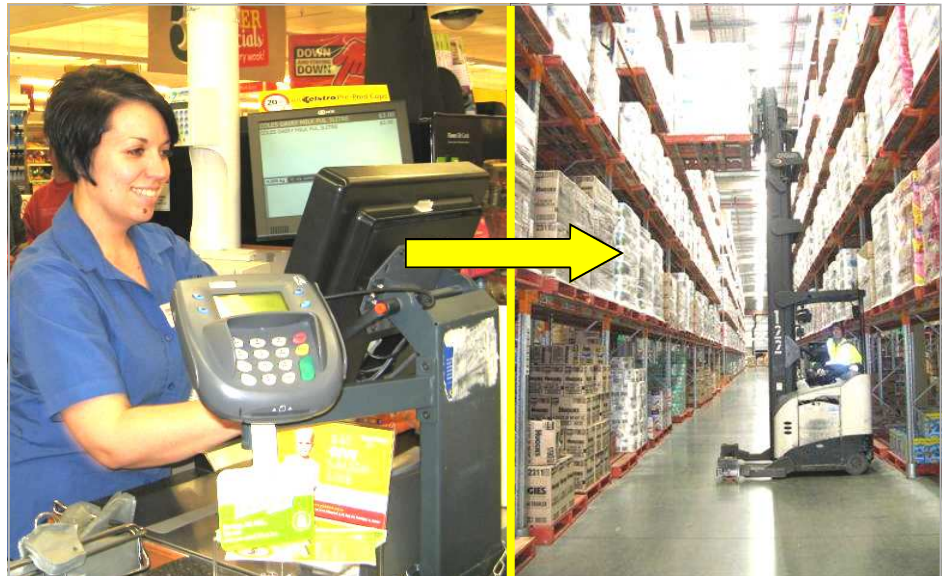
"As an item is scanned at a checkout in one of the supermarkets we service, it generates an order for that particular product through the system that flows through to the distribution centre," said Goulburn RDC Planning Manager Keith Pekin.

Goulburn is one of Coles' two RDCs in NSW; the other is the larger Smeaton Grange RDC near Campbelltown on Sydney's outskirts. It is adjacent to the major interchange on the Hume Highway, near the relocated Big Merino.

The Goulburn RDC services Coles and BiLo supermarkets in Canberra, on the south coast, some Sydney metropolitan stores, west to Tumut, Griffith and Wagga Wagga, and north-west to Narromine and Dubbo.

Goulburn RDC is worth over \$20 million to the local economy. Coles employs about 280 people while Linfox, who does all the transporting for Coles at Goulburn with 21 vehicles, has about 70 employees on site.

Coles moved to this site in a light industrial



*From the checkout scan in a supermarket to the automatic ordering at Coles' Regional Distribution Centre at Goulburn. Courtesy Coles RDC Goulburn.*

area 5 km south of Goulburn CBD in 2007 from a smaller site, also in Goulburn.

The Goulburn RDC has 40,000 sq m under roof. It dispatches 400,000 cartons weekly with capacity to expand that.

Linfox site manager at Goulburn RDC Matthew Baines said their major transport issues in the SEATS region are:

- the lack of B-double access to Bega;
- the need for continued upgrade and extension of Nerriga Road M92 which would considerably improve their access to the Nowra and Ulladulla area.

## Gippsland transport hub calls for interest

Development of the Gippsland Logistics Precinct in Morwell moved closer last month when Victoria's Deputy Premier and Regional and Rural Development Minister Peter Ryan launched Latrobe City Council's call for expressions of interest.

"Council is targeting property developers, logistics operators and industrial companies to develop and manage the precinct," he said.

Developing this fully integrated industrial estate and transport hub to service the Latrobe Valley and Gippsland region is a key priority for Council. Its aim is to promote more efficient and cost effective freight transport to and from the rapidly growing region and attract new business.

The Precinct is beside the Princes Freeway 3 km east of Morwell with two distinct but integrated components.

1. The Gippsland Intermodal Freight Terminal (GIFT) on the main Gippsland rail line, now leased by Council from VicTrack;
2. A 64 ha site adjacent to GIFT owned by Latrobe City Council.

Mr Ryan said the precinct would give occupying businesses a competitive edge by integrating manufacturing and transport infrastructure in a single location.

Council has identified sufficient local demand to develop the site, with an estimated viable demand longer-term for container and bulk cargo rail freight.

All enterprises at the precinct will have access to rail through GIFT.

Council expects to be able to appoint a developer/site operator by the end of the year allowing operations to start quickly on site.

## Industry funds road maintenance



Extra work on Imlay and Edrom Roads will be costly. Photo Graham Foley.

A study for the South East Truck Safety Committee (SETSC) highlighted that an extra \$2.4 million needs to be spent on Edrom and Imlay Roads, south of Eden, over the next two years to bring the roads to acceptable standards. Sourcing funds to do so is a major concern. That is on top of the \$300,000 p.a. the main users spend on normal maintenance.

SETSC was set up by the forest and timber industries from Bairnsdale to Nowra and the Monaro as a forum to address issues facing their haulage operators.

South East Fibre Exports (SEFE) Peter Rutherford said since these roads were built by NSW Forestry in the 1960s/1970s, their traffic has increased enormously.

The Imlay Road (57 km linking the Monaro Hwy with the Princes Hwy) now carries 700,000 tonnes of forest product a year,

and Edrom Road (17 km linking the Princes Hwy with SEFE and the multi-purpose wharf in Two-fold Bay) carries 1.3 million tonnes. Imlay Road is the only road passing from the tablelands to the coast between the Victorian border and the Illawarra not requiring the break up of B-doubles.

These roads are still owned and maintained by Forests NSW, which is not recognised as a road authority (unlike the situation in Victoria). This means it is not eligible for government roads funding. Maintenance of these roads is currently funded by industry users based on usage — SEFE, VicForest and Forests NSW (from timber royalties). Other users do not, e.g. Commonwealth Defence.

Mr Rutherford believes SEATS is the appropriate regional organisation to help raise their concerns with government.

## Gocup Road holds out for RDA funding

Tumut Shire Council (TSC) has applied for Regional Development Australia (RDA) funding to upgrade parts of the 32 km Gocup Road, linking Tumut with the Hume Hwy.

Gocup Road is an important link for timber industry vehicles moving timber and processed products in and out of Tumut. Last

year it was classified a State instead of a regional road recognising its strategic importance.

The Roads and Traffic Authority will bring forward \$5.8 million to fund priority sections of the road, but that is contingent on \$6.1 million in RDA funding.

Total upgrade is estimated at \$60 to \$80 million.

## What is SEATS?

South East Transport Strategy (SEATS) aims to stimulate and facilitate investment in transport and infrastructure in south eastern NSW, eastern Victoria and the ACT. Its 45 members represent councils, industry and other organisations from Wollongong to Dandenong.

### Freight strategy facts

The draft new National Land Freight Strategy forecasts by 2030 a:

- 50% increase in truck traffic;
- 150% increase in containers through our ports;
- 90% increase in rail freight;
- 110% increase in international air freight.

### Beyond MR 92

Councils with a specific interest in MR 92 will meet within the next few weeks to discuss route options after Nerriga and to determine how to achieve a study to examine these options. Those councils are Upper Lachlan, Goulburn Mulwaree, Shoalhaven and Palerang.

### SEATS meetings

**18-19 August** : Hosted by East Gippsland, Lakes Entrance. AGM.

**17-18 November** : Hosted Wollongong City Council at Wollongong. **2012**

**16-17 February** : Hosted by Wellington Shire Council at Sale, Vic.

**17-18 May**: Hosted by Yass Valley Council at Yass, NSW.

**17-18 August**: Hosted by VicRoads at Wantirna, Vic.

### SEATS Executive

Chairman Cr Sue Whelan (Queanbeyan City Council), Deputy Chairman Cr Graeme Middlemiss (Latrobe City), Sec/ Treas David Byrne (Cooma-Monaro).

**Victorian representatives:** Gordon Charles (East Gippsland), Cr Jeanette Harding (South Gippsland) and Cr John Duscher (Bass Coast)

**NSW representatives:** Cr Bob Stewart (Bombala Shire), Greg Pullen (Shoalhaven City) and Warren Sharpe (Eurobodalla).