



# Push for safety and efficiency

Trucks are accepted by the community as being vital for our community to function, said Australian Trucking Association (ATA) National Manager-Policy David Coonan. "Our aim is to make the trucking industry safer and more efficient," he said.

His presentation at the recent SEATS meeting at Tumut created considerable interest because of the practical information it contained. This included various measures of truck impact in terms of safety, fuel efficiency and road wear presented as a Truck Impact Chart.

Mr Coonan said this information enables more informed and open dialogue between the industry and the community about the impact of various truck configurations. For example, fewer B-double versus many more smaller trucks which cause more damage and involve more safety risks.

"It is vitally important the industry has this dialogue with councils, road engineers and communities," he said. "It may be better to have say fewer B-



ATA says B-triples could take over from B-doubles .

double going along a road out of school hours than having many more smaller trucks to carry the same amount of freight with a higher road safety risk . "

He said the ATA has put an enormous effort into producing the Chart. "What is really quite extraordinary about it is there are so many layers be-

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## New Minister reclassifies Gocup as State road

Just days after taking office, NSW Roads Minister David Borger announced the overstressed Gocup Road linking Tumut and Gundagai would be reclassified as a State Road. It will be officially gazetted 1 July.

"You could have blown us off our feet," said Tumut Shire Council general manager Bob Stewart who was at a Country Mayor's Conference in Sydney with Mayor Trina Thompson on 3 June when the Minister made his announcement.

It follows a long campaign by Tumut and Gundagai Shire Councils, assisted more recently by SEATS and industry groups. SEATS' May meeting featured the Gocup Road.

Mr Borger said he recognised Gocup's high commercial use by the timber industry more than justified the need for change, and that councils'

campaign to this end had gone on too long.

"Gocup is the main arterial road from Gundagai, the Hume Highway and Tumut, but services a much wider area of Tumut and more industries than just Visy, including State Forests, Tumbarumba, Batlow and others," Mr Borger said. "The RTA will continue to discuss future funding needs and possible sources of additional funding with Gundagai and Tumut councils, the Federal Government and key industry stakeholders including the timber industry."

Mr Stewart said it means Council will not spend any more of its scarce funds on Gocup Road. "It's now on the State's funding agenda and while I am not aware of funds being available at the moment, we look forward to seeing substantial funds allocated in the future," he said. "It also gives access to Federal funds."

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## Visy's transport challenge

Visy's Tumut plant is "embedded in a Government-planned regional industry" producing industrial paper from plantation-based timber, sawmill residues and recycled paper.

Visy's Ben Casauria told the Tumut meeting they use 1.9 million tonnes of wood per year (two-thirds roundwood: one-third mill residues), about 60% from within 60 km of mill.

They produce 680,000 tonnes per year unbleached Kraft paper, over half is exported overseas via the Wagga intermodal.

The local road network carried less than 1 million tonnes of freight before Visy came in 1990, now it is almost 6 million, about half on Gocup Road.

He said they are constantly looking at making their transport operations more efficient and safer, thereby increasing their international competitiveness, but the road network limits their use of high productivity vehicles. For example, they containerize product at Tumut for export but are limited to one container per service truck compared with two on a super-B double, but the road is not classified for them.

Visy introduced 23 m B-doubles 12 months ago for long distance log haulage with lower centre of gravity. These reduce roll-over risk, are more manoeuvrable, and more fuel efficient.

He said differences in HML between states and even between council areas add to their transport costs and inefficiencies.



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hind it, specific information can be fed into it for a particular truck or modular configuration to determine the impact," Mr Coonan said.

Some other interesting comments included:

- 80% of trucks are not carrying their full load;
- more than one-third of the freight task by the trucking industry is interstate;
- it is only a matter of time before B-triples replace B-doubles;
- modular vehicles provide coupling and uncoupling opportunities.

The ATA has updated its Truck Impact Chart since the Tumut meeting. The updated chart is available on the SEATS website, along with Mr Coonan's presentation.

## SEATS Chairman speaks...

We had a great meeting in Tumut. It was one of our best attended meetings yet.

We saw first hand the concerns of Tumut and Gundagai Shire Councils, residents and the industry about Gocup Road. SEATS has lobbied strongly with those councils for a few years for State and Federal Government funding. It's pleasing that since our meeting the State Government has determined the Gocup Road will be a State Road.



*Cr Sue Whelan*

It was very good to learn of transport industry concerns about transport infrastructure. Chris Sutherland and Mark Williams from Sutherlands Transport and David Coonan from the Australian Trucking Industry certainly opened our eyes to the infrastructure problems as the industry sees them. This is the kind of information groups like ours needs to ensure that we are all talking about common concerns. It can only improve our advocacy.

SEATS members also had the chance to speak with members of the Softwoods Working Group who have been strong supporters of SEATS and our work.

Members were also given a good run down on the mapping of the SEATS region and our priority projects undertaken by Natalie Elliott-Perfremment and her team at GHD Morwell. This work will soon be on our SEATS website and will assist all members as they talk with government about our regional transport infrastructure needs.

As we approach both the Victorian and Federal elections later this year, I urge all members to acquaint themselves with SEATS election policy documents so we can speak with a united voice to all politicians and would be politicians in the forthcoming campaigns. These are on SEATS website. The NSW campaign is also on the boil and SEATS has been encouraged by the recognition we are already getting as people "gear up" for that election.

If you need any further information to help with your campaign in your area please visit our SEATS website and also please contact our CEO Chris Vardon who will be only too happy to assist you.

*Cr Sue Whelan  
Chairman*

# Road-rail networks key to future freight

We can only meet the future freight task by making better use of existing transport infrastructure by making it safer, more efficient and better for communities, said Chris Sutherland of Sutherland's Transport at Cootamundra.

"That means using integrated road-rail networks," he said, noting the NSW Government's target of carrying 40% of freight on rail. "Rail has to come back for long haul and heavier freight because I know, as a road operator, road just can't cope with the increasing freight task in coming years, but that requires government support."

Reasons he gave for road's inability to meet that task included pressure on the road infrastructure, a shortage of drivers, and the increasing cost of equipment for safe and efficient road transport.

"We're a long way behind achieving that 40% target because rail is far more expensive than road



*Sutherland's Transport' Intermodal Freight Terminal at Cootamundra shows the way with integrated road-rail networks.*

than it should be," he said.

At SEATS Tumut meeting, Chris and Mark Williams spoke of Sutherland's Transport' Intermodal Freight Terminal at Cootamundra. They said it's ideally located - on the main Melbourne to Sydney rail corridor, on the exchange point to Perth, at the gateway from Griffith and the Riverina to Sydney, and will be on the proposed inland rail route between Melbourne and Brisbane..

Mr Sutherland advocates greater decentralisation of businesses into the regions but emphasises the need for state and federal governments and businesses to work closely with local councils to ensure the infrastructure is there and capable of supporting that business expansion.

Sutherland Transport operates 20 prime movers and 30 trailers, valued at over \$10 million. Customers include Visy, Nufarm, One Steel and Linfox, with about 40% of its work on Tumut Shire roads.

On Gocup Road (see page 4)... This is the major road transport route into and out of Tumut to Sydney, Canberra and Queensland, but the last 20km into Tumut is weight restricted so trucks are under loaded for their entire trip.

Mr Sutherland said the local trucking fraternity knows in its current condition it is not a "safe" road, narrow with few overtaking opportunities, so they have put in their own extra rules for heavy vehicles - a speed limit of 85kph and specific driver training.

Sutherlands have gone further to make their trucks and drivers as safe as possible. Each truck is speed limited (which varies according to weather conditions), and fitted with GPS and the Optalert Fatigue Management System. The two management systems have been integrated for 'real time' driver fatigue alerts.

Upgrading Gocup Rd, he said, would save industry up to \$4 million pa.

## Reflecting on SEATS...

Very surprised to be honest," said Wollongong City Council's Director of Infrastructure and Works Peter Kofod on his impressions of his first SEATS meeting.

"It's a large diverse group with a very clear direction and although various organisations may have different issues, they're all interlinked. I was also impressed with the amount of information shared within the group.

"As a major city within the SEATS area it is an important group to be on board."

Kiama Municipal Council is not a member of SEATS but Cr Neil Reilly has recommended that his Council join, following his recent observations at Tumut.

"I was really impressed," Cr Reilly said.

"One, was the level of expertise and practical experience from across south-east of Australia.

"Another was it brought together a broad spectrum of interests and people from councils, government and semi-government authorities, and industry, representing road, rail, airports and ports.

"What's really terrific is its lobbying. Many groups focus on a particular idea, but SEATS' position is only reached after consensus from its broad membership base.

This results in a sensible and practical position going forward."

# Why Gocup needs funding

The plight of Gocup Road was made abundantly clear to everyone at SEATS' Tumut meeting, as well as why it needed to be gazetted as a State rather than a regional road (see page 1).

Tumut Shire Council's Economic Development Officer Glenn Waterhouse and Assistant Manager Assets Greg Miller produced some interesting facts on the local plantation timber industry.

- Investment over \$2.1b, includes \$1.5b in Visy's manufacturing plant;
- Product sales > \$620m pa;
- 50% employment in Shire depends on timber;
- employment 1,731 FTE.

They highlighted how investment in infrastructure, especially roads, has not proportionally matched investment in timber plantations and manufacturing. Investment has increased potential production by up to 40% in the past five years.

Serious infrastructure deficiencies exist at current production volumes, so even bigger problems are expected once full manufacturing production is reached.

## Map shows all

An interactive map of the entire SEATS region has been produced by Natalie Elliott-Perfremont and team at GHD.

"It's interactive using many overlays to provide a visual display of all SEATS' priority strategic projects and important economic and social drivers, such as industries, development, population, and transport routes. It includes airports, intermodals, ports, forests and marine parks."

She said they will update the map every quarter with information SEATS members want included.

It will be on SEATS website in late June.



On the Gocup Road

The Gocup Road is the primary transport route for all traffic to and from Tumut. It is also the primary heavy vehicle route from Tumut to Sydney, Canberra and Queensland via the Hume Highway with 24/7 access.

It carries 40% (540,000 t) of outbound manufactured timber products from Tumut and increasing volumes of inbound pulpwood from the Bombala and Bathurst-Oberon areas (over 500,000 t) to meet Visy demand. Daily heavy vehicle movements on Gocup increased from 193 in 2000 to 450 in 2010 (18% of all vehicles are HV). Yet the road fails RTA standards for much of its length.

Mr Miller said safety for all road users is a major issue. Another issue is the industry's inability to take advantage of high productivity vehicles because infrastructure is not appropriate.

The RTA estimates full upgrade of Gocup Road would cost \$82m, with \$30.1m as immediate needs within five years. That is beyond councils and needs long term government and industry commitment to fund road infrastructure for the timber industry.

Infrastructure Australia says it wants better connection between road and rail, but there has been no commitment on intermodals by government or industry.

A key issue here is connection to the rail head via Gocup and the Hume.

## 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 43 members represent councils, industry and other organisations from Wollongong to Dandenong.

## Election policies

Copies of SEATS election policies have been sent to all sitting politicians, government and non-government authorities. They will be sent to all candidates as they are pre-selected.

## New NSW Ministers

NSW Premier appointed John Robertson Minister for Transport and David Borger Minister for Roads, after David Campbell's resignation as Minister for Transport and Roads on 20 May.

## Princes campaign

Southern Councils Group has launched the 'Upgrade the Princes Highway' campaign by the Group and its partners (includes SEATS and NRMA). It is an interactive site seeking feedback on...

[www.upgradetheprinceshighway.com.au](http://www.upgradetheprinceshighway.com.au).

## SEATS meetings

**19-20 August:** hosted by Latrobe City Council at Morwell. AGM.

**18-19 November:** hosted by Kiama Municipal Council at Kiama.

**17-18 February 2011:** hosted by East Gippsland Shire at Lakes Entrance.

## 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 Greg Miller (Tumut).