



**NEWSLETTER** March 2010

South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc.

# SEATS hits election path

**S**EATS now has a comprehensive set of election policy issues ready to take to all candidates in the coming Victorian, NSW and Federal elections.

"These are clear and definitive requests for improved transport infrastructure in the south-east region which is so vital to economic development and generating employment in our south east region," said SEATS CEO Chris Vardon.

"They've been prepared over the last three months by SEATS 43 members who represent local government authorities and industry groups across Victoria, NSW and the ACT. " See web page.

Mr Vardon said Government or semi-government agencies who are members of SEATS did not participate in formulating these policies because they may be asked to advise Government on SEATS' proposals. However they did advise on their practicality and some details and that advice was invaluable.

"It's been a major undertaking that's drawn extensively on SEATS updated Strategic Network document and the relevant priority projects." Cross-border issues will be raised with all governments.

Over the coming months Mr Vardon and SEATS executive members will visit the region's Federal and State representatives and the secretariats or directorates of each political party. They will also provide each candidate in the region with a copy of the relevant SEATS policies. Mr Vardon will also meet with the Gippsland Local Government Network and with individual Victorian Councils over the next two months.

While the dates for both state elections are

## ELECTION DATES

**Victorian** - Saturday 27 November 2010.

**NSW** - Saturday 26 March 2011.

**Federal elections** - due towards late 2010 but may not be held until early April 2011.

fixed, there is some speculation that the Federal elections could be called before Victoria's to avoid conflict with both state elections.

The major thrust of SEATS approach is that all levels of government need to work together to develop a robust strategy to improve the region's transport infrastructure.

It also advocates the development of partnerships between Federal and State Governments to allow agreement on projects of critical importance for transport efficiency for the south east region's development, growth and employment.

This is in keeping with Infrastructure Australia's determination that requests for infrastructure project funding must demonstrate that the project has regional benefits, is capable of enhancing and maintaining employment prospects, is culturally and socially inclusive, is environmentally sustainable and meets benefit cost criteria.

Mr Vardon said shifting responsibility of project delivery from one government to another is no longer appropriate or acceptable. "It's increasingly apparent that projects with the full cooperation of local, state and federal government and community and industry groups are preferred," he said.



## Network 'Bible' finalised

The guts of SEATS' Strategic Transport Network document is now settled, with mapping of the region, key employment data and population and tourist industry information to be finalised at SEATS May meeting.

Strategy co-coordinator Ralf Kastan is more than happy with the document which pulls together a mass of material that focuses on creating economic development by improving transport networks in the south east region. Its strength is its regional non-parochial approach.

"I think it will be a tremendous resource for SEATS members and will be of great assistance to local councils when making submissions on transport infrastructure matters," Mr Kastan said. "It provides a context for SEATS priority projects as well as a valuable background document for government agencies."

It includes a considerable amount of information including an overview of significant government and industry transport policies and strategies, as well as economic and social drivers relevant to the projects SEATS is advocating.

Members decided at the February meeting that a reference document should also be placed on the website ([www.seats.org.au](http://www.seats.org.au)) to direct members to the significant number of policies on transport and freight issues developed by government.



## Victoria's timber insights

Victoria's Department of Transport representatives gave a fascinating insight into how to manage cross border timber industry issues.

The Department's Executive Director Intergovernmental Relationships Lachlan McDonald and Deputy Director Stephen Smith gave SEATS' February meeting a brief summary of their '2009 Victoria's Timber Industry Strategy', the Timber Transport Local Management Guidelines Green Triangle Region (between Victoria and South Australia), and how a similar protocol could be developed in the SEATS region.

They stressed the need for regional planning and networking, the importance of cooperation between LGAs and across state borders in order to bring about necessary economic development. A key element of their presentation was a desire to engage with NSW Councils to consider cross border issues and opportunities.

SEATS March 2010 Newsletter page 2

## SEATS Chairman speaks...

SEATS members are extremely grateful to Bass Coast Shire Council for hosting our February meeting at Phillip Island.



*Cr Sue Whelan*

It was a real 'eye opener' to see the amount of development going on in Bass Coast and South Gippsland Shire Council areas. It is obviously a 'go ahead' region with significant development by private investors and by the Victorian, Federal and local governments. The tour, that included the desalination plant site, proved how essential it is for state and local government to work together to provide services to the whole community.

It was one of our best attended meetings and was certainly extremely interesting to see what good work was being done. Delegates provided considerable input into the discussion.

One of the most interesting was the L2P program which started in the Bass Coast Shire. This is described in this newsletter (*page 4*) and I commend the program to all members.

SEATS has developed an Election Policy document covering Federal and both state governments (*see page 1*). This will be rolled out as the elections get closer and will be sent to all ministers, shadow ministers and parliamentarians, as well as all candidates in each electorate. It will also be discussed with political party secretariats or directorates.

I urge members to encourage their community to get behind these policies.

We must make it known to everyone seeking election that we need a first class transport infrastructure network if we are to:

- create employment opportunities in our region;
- ensure our community can access the facilities needed to make life as easy and pleasant as possible.

It would also be advantageous to encourage people generally to look at SEATS website [www.seats.org.au](http://www.seats.org.au) which has many items of interest to the broader community.

The coming months are critical to SEATS' work. Please get behind us to make sure state and Federal Governments know we need action to help create opportunities for healthy and viable communities in the future.

*Cr Sue Whelan  
Chairman*

# Victoria's novices become safer drivers

safer drivers and therefore safer roads is the aim of Victoria's L2P Learner Driver Program for underprivileged people.

It is a partnership between councils, VicRoads and community-based organisations and it greatly impressed delegates at the recent SEATS meeting.

Bass Coast Shire Council's Community Safety Manager Peter Laydon said the program started in 2007 to assist Sudanese migrants in their area gain their learner's permits first off, and then the mandatory 120 hours supervised driving experience to get their licences.

"A local magistrate had noted that Sudanese were over-represented in the Local Court on driving related matters, so he approached the Police and Council for help," Mr Laydon said.

"With VicRoads assistance and input from some Sudanese people, we put this program together using volunteer supervisory drivers trained by VicRoads.

"VicRoads saw the program's wider potential and has now taken it to 43 local councils and provided \$90 million funding over three years."

Councils act as facilitators and 'bankers' with the program actually run through a community-based organisation.

He said an estimated 3,000 people a year in Victoria find it difficult to get a licence because



Bass Coast Councillors Veronica Dowman and Gareth Barlow with Community Safety Manager Peter Laydon. Pic Bass Coast.

of a lack of access to a car or other socio-economic factors. "Yet a driver's licence is often necessary to get employment in this area," he said.

The L2P program aims to:

- reduce the crash and injury rate of novice drivers by ensuring they have 120 hours supervised practice;
- increase the equity of opportunity for all young Victorians to be safer and obtain a driver's licence.

This presentation is on SEATS website.

## Focus on Princes corridor

The RTA will conduct a strategic corridor review of the Princes Highway, Wollongong to the Victorian border, to be completed later this year.

It will be similar to the Kings Highway corridor strategy released recently. It will look at all issues associated with the Princes Highway into the future, such as capacity, safety and transport needs.



"It's really excellent that the RTA and NSW Government are doing such a study on the Princes Highway, and that they will put the study into the public arena so that local government and the community can provide feedback and comment on its validity," said Eurobodalla Shire Council's Roads and Recreation Director Warren Sharpe.

The Kings Highway study is in the 'Queanbeyan to Batemans Bay Corridor Study' available on the RTA website.

## RDA sees SEATS as big win

Being a member of SEATS is a big win for us," said Fiona Hatcher, Executive Officer of the recently formed Regional Development Australia (RDA) South Coast. This RDA covers the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla and Bega Valley Local Government Areas.

SEATS February meeting was the first she had attended in her new role.

"We're looking at regional development, and SEATS has the most information on current projects," Ms Hatcher said.

"Going to the February meeting was just fantastic for us - really friendly, very informative and great networking. It's very important to know who is who, and who we should talk with to find out more information.

"So we gained a great overview, and came back with loads of information and a heap of contacts."

# Focus on Vic's east coast

The amount of development underway in the Bass Coast and South Gippsland areas impressed SEATS delegates.

Bass Coast Shire Council Infrastructure Director Steve Pisante spoke of the challenges of infrastructure renewal, their ageing population, climate change, increased pressures on their coastline, and the short term impact of building the desalination plant in the Shire (*see below*).

Major industries are construction, agriculture and tourism, including the Motorcycle Grand Prix and V8 Supercars. Bass Coast EDO Peter Francis noted in peak holiday times the population increases from 28,800 to over 70,000.

He spoke of the challenges of managing increasing growth and development (DAs valued at \$268 million 2008/09), providing necessary infrastructure, the freight task and the infrastructure

to support developing industries.

South Gippsland Shire has a small population (27,000) but a \$280 billion a year economy. EDO Ken Fraser said it is based around dairy and beef industries and supporting industries, horticulture, servicing oil and gas industries, sand mining and a \$220 million tourism industry.

Recent and proposed developments include a \$200million Murray Goulburn dairy factory upgrade, a \$40 million Education Precinct development at Leongatha and developments by Burra Foods and United Dairy Power.

Key infrastructure developments include an \$8 million development of the port at Barry Beach, \$50million natural gas connection, \$16million optic fibre connection and a significant sewerage upgrade, and a major upgrade of the Koonwarra Saleyards. These presentations are on SEATS website [www.seats.org.au](http://www.seats.org.au)

## Plant impacts transport short term



Artist's impression of desalination plant. Courtesy Bass Coast Shire Council.

Earthworks are underway for construction of the \$3.5 billion Melbourne Water desalination plant and pipeline at Wonthaggi on the Bass Coast. It should be finished late 2011 when the plant will start supplying 150 billion litres of drinking water a year to Melbourne.

The contract was awarded

to the AquaSure Consortium, one of the largest PPP's in Australia. The consortium consists of Suez Environnement, Degremont SA, Thiess Pty Ltd and the MacQuarie Group. VicRoads is involved in managing associated vehicle movements. Nearby roads needed a \$12 million upgrade to deal with increased traffic.

## 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.

### Gippsland Intermodal

The lease on Gippsland Logistics Precinct is nearly ready for signing. Freight operators will soon be asked to express interest in the project. One challenge will be to get rolling stock.

### Princes re-routing

The concept design and environmental assessment for rerouting Princes Highway Gerringong to Bombaderry should be completed by mid 2010. REF for first section (Mt Pleasant to Toolijooa) will be exhibited soon.

### Ten year logging plans

Greg Miller (Tumut Shire) suggests ten year harvesting plans should be undertaken so Councils could better manage roads used by timber and plantation operators.

## SEATS meetings

**20-21 May:** hosted by Tumut Shire at Tumut.

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

**18-19 November:** hosted by Southern Councils Group and Kiama Council at Kiama.

## 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).