

SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT STRATEGY INC.



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FEDERAL ELECTION POLICIES

2010 - 2011

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INTRODUCTION

The South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc (SEATS) - is an organisation concerned with establishing and facilitating investment in transport infrastructure which drives regional economic development. The organisation consists of local government organisations, regional development corporations, government departments, tertiary education institutions and private enterprise who work cooperatively together.

South Eastern Australia is rich in primary resources, has a skilled labour force and a wealth of natural assets. Transport impediments are holding up identified investments in the region. Poor access is also reducing the returns for existing businesses and preventing further investment. It is likely that key transport improvements would generate billions of dollars in new investment.

SEATS has the responsibility to provide all major political parties which may be involved in elections with some clear and definitive requests which our communities would wish to see addressed as part of election promises made. SEATS will ensure that every political party is lobbied with copies of our requests for transport infrastructure in the south east region of Australia. All individual candidates in each electorate will be given a copy of our requests and will be asked to endorse those policies applicable to their particular electorate.

This paper addresses those issues. It does not purport to be a definitive document. It is presented to enable some discussion with SEATS about the transport infrastructure needs in the south east area of Australia.

These election policy issues have been prepared, using information developed over a twelve month period, provided by SEATS membership representing 25 local government authorities and industry supporters across Victoria, NSW and the ACT.

The various Government or semi-government agencies who are also members of SEATS did not participate in the formulation of this document as they may well be asked to advise Government on the proposals we are advocating for inclusion in election manifestos. However, their advice regarding the practicalities and formulation of the minutiae of these plans has been invaluable.

It should be noted that some issues are cross border issues and will therefore be raised with all governments.

All projects raised within this document are currently priority projects adopted by SEATS members in November 2009. Each project has a short description and further information about them may be obtained by consulting the SEATS website which is www.seats.org.au.

Cr Sue Whelan
Chairman
South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc
March 2010

Chris Vardon OAM
Chief Executive Officer
South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc

FEDERAL ISSUES

PREAMBLE

All levels of government need to accept responsibility to ensure that a pro-active, co-operative strategic direction is in place to enable delivery of improvements to and upgrade of the transport infrastructure needs in the south eastern region of Australia.

This issue is a fundamental platform advocated by SEATS to all Governments in our region.

Partnership plans need to be developed between Federal and State Governments to allow agreement on projects of critical importance for transport efficiency for regional development and growth.

Infrastructure Australia has determined that requests for infrastructure project funding should be able to 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.

It is apparent that communities throughout Australia want co-operative policies adopted by Federal, State and Local Government to ensure the delivery of best practice to the electorate. It is also apparent that communities are looking for timely, well-planned and properly constructed upgrades of transport infrastructure projects.

Politically appealing rhetoric of shifting responsibility of project delivery from one tier of government to another is no longer appropriate. It has become increasingly apparent that projects which have the full cooperation of local, state and federal government and community and industry groups are preferred.

POLICY ISSUES

SEATS commends the Australian Government on its visionary plan, Building the Nation, to improve the national transport network and its interconnectivity between road, rail, sea and air infrastructure assets.

SEATS believes that:

- **Building the Nation should recognise south east Australia immediately.**
- **The Strategic Regional Funding Program should be maintained and expanded.**
- **The Australian Government must demonstrate leadership in bringing together all levels of government to address transport improvement priorities.**
- **Australian Governments need to recognise leadership at the regional level with respect to transport network planning.**

- **SEATS believes that Building the Nation should recognise south east Australia immediately.** The current program fails to completely recognise south eastern Australia, from Wollongong to Sale, which represents an area of significant economic importance to Australia.
- **SEATS believes that the Strategic Regional Funding Program should be maintained and expanded.** This program is an important part in addressing inter-regional needs and driving regional economic development. This competitive grant program allows major capital projects to be undertaken which would normally be deferred through lack of Local Government funds.
- **SEATS believes that the Australian Government must demonstrate leadership in bringing together all levels of government to address transport improvement priorities.** It has become apparent that the direction taken by Infrastructure Australia in calling for submissions on infrastructure projects, requiring those submissions to address key criteria (as outlined in SEATS Project templates) and requiring those submissions to undergo rigorous analysis is now accepted as best practice. Accordingly, SEATS has recommended only those projects which meet these rigorous criteria.
- **SEATS believes that Australian Governments need to recognise leadership at the regional level with respect to transport network planning.** Groups such as SEATS should be supported through the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Local Government, the NSW Transport and Roads Department and the Victorian Departments of Transport and Roads to develop regional priorities.

SEATS believes that:

- The Roads to Recovery (R2R) program should be continued as a permanent part of Australian Government funding directly to local government to address their own local strategic priorities.
- The Australian Government should allow funding from existing programs to be utilised for project planning and design addressing environmental & engineering issues.
- A greater proportion of funds raised by the Australian Government from transport users be reinvested in transport infrastructure and public transport systems.
- An ongoing audit of ports and airports to address the adequacy of national security and then provide funding to upgrade security should be commenced.
- The Australian Government to establish a funding mechanism to enable timely rehabilitation of airport tarmacs.

- SEATS believes that the Roads to Recovery (R2R) program should be continued as a permanent part of Australian government funding directly to local government to address their own local strategic priorities. The provision of a "Direct to Local Government" funding program for asset renewal and major maintenance is essential to retain the asset in its most effective form.
- SEATS believes that the Australian Government should allow funding from existing programs to be utilised for project planning and design addressing environmental and engineering issues. On most of the network a policy of continuous improvement should be scheduled in such a way that projects can be delivered in a reasonable timeframe and not postponed due to any inadequacy in ensuring that proper environmental standards are undertaken and pursued. It is essential to ensure that adequate planning funding is built in to any project funding offered by Federal or State Government.
- SEATS believes that a greater proportion of funds raised by the Australian government from transport users be reinvested in transport infrastructure and public transport systems. This is consistent with the view that budget surpluses should be spent on community infrastructure such as roads, hospitals and education rather than personal taxation cuts. SEATS supports the review being undertaken which is investigating the possibility of a user charge approach to road funding in Australia provided that it is not a two or three tiered user charge basis.
- SEATS seeks an ongoing audit of ports and airports to address the adequacy of national security and then provide funding to upgrade security.
- SEATS seeks the Australian Government to establish a funding mechanism to enable timely rehabilitation of airport tarmacs. This is beyond the ability of the responsible Councils and requires some action by the Federal Government to assist with strengthening of regional airport runways to meet existing and new loadings.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Infrastructure Projects

SEATS reviewed its priority projects for inclusion in funding programs in late 2009. The following projects were selected because of their regional importance:

Port Kembla Upgrade

Estimated Cost: \$660m (Stage 1: \$97m)

Purpose: To reclaim approximately 52 hectares of land within the outer harbour for the construction of seven new berths. The project can be staged and as such will be developed based on demand.

Importantly the project will be able to handle the overflow of containers from Port Botany once Port Botany reaches capacity in 2024 or sooner.



Port of Hastings

Estimated Cost:

Purpose: To action the Victorian Government document Port Futures (August 2009) confirming the Port of Hastings as the overflow container port for the Port of Melbourne. Road and rail links to the Gippsland regional corridor must be established to enable movement of freight from planned intermodal facilities.

Picton Road

Estimated Cost: \$ unknown at this stage

Purpose: Funding provided for safety improvements has been made available, including line marking, signage, upgrading of selected sections of road, and curve and shoulder improvements.

Further improvements to alignment, in addition to the current \$12m project, are required to address the high incidence of accidents on this road.

Princes Highway – Gerringong-Bomaderry realignment

Estimated Cost: \$800m

Purpose: To realign and widen the Princes Highway between Mount Pleasant (north of Gerringong) and the urban area of Bomaderry - a distance of 32 kilometres.

This upgrade will replace the existing single lane carriageway that crosses the Foxground ridge and has poor horizontal and vertical alignment with little overtaking opportunities with a dual lane carriageway divided in its entire length by various forms of traffic management engineering structures.

Already the route has been the subject of extensive engineering and environmental analysis and community consultation. Various route options were considered with a final route now having been determined.



Princes Highway – South Nowra duplication

Estimated cost: \$70m

Purpose: To upgrade the existing Princes Highway single carriageway from the southern end of the Nowra residential area, through the South Nowra growing industrial precinct and connect to the recently upgraded 4 lane divided carriageway at Forest Road Falls Creek - a distance of 6.3kms.

The project will deliver a divided carriageway having a combination of 2/3 lanes in both a northerly and southerly direction. This configuration should also deliver adequate options at each intersection appropriate to the type of catchment (including b-doubles) to be serviced now and into the anticipated future.

Some realignment and reconfiguration of side streets may need to be undertaken to minimise the number of intersections to maximise the priority to through traffic but not to the detriment of providing "last mile" connectivity.



Kings Highway – Batemans Bay-Braidwood

Estimated Cost: \$46.3m

Purpose: This project involves the reconstruction and realignment of sections of the Kings Highway between Batemans Bay and west of Northangera Bridge (east of Braidwood).

The desired outcome is the provision of consistent lane widths of 3.5m minimum with lane widening on curves for heavy transport vehicles and sealed shoulders widths of 1.0-3.0m on both sides. This will provide sufficient overtaking opportunities to better manage use of the route by transport vehicles during normal times and peak hourly traffic volumes occurring weekly on Friday, Saturday and Sunday as well as throughout the peak summer and school holiday periods.

Sub-standard curves need to be realigned to increase safety along this length of Highway. In some cases the realignment will require the acquisition of land from private land holders as well as from National Park.



Princes Highway – Victoria Creek realignment

Estimated Cost: \$70m

Purpose: The proposal is to improve the highway alignment and provide a wider bridge. The current highway has poor alignment and narrow formation with poor overtaking opportunities. Archaeological investigations have been completed together with geotechnical and utility surveys. A concept design has also been completed. Funding is allocated for planning work.

SEATS supports the findings of the Coronial Inquiry of 2008 which indicated that the Highway from Victoria Creek to Dignams Creek should be upgraded in its entirety.



Princes Highway – Dignams Creek realignment

Estimated Cost: \$70m

Purpose: The proposal is for road realignment with new bridge at Dignams Creek. Investigations into possible realignments are in progress with possible routes being identified. The need for an aboriginal focus group has been identified. Funding is allocated for planning work.



Gocup Road - Tumut-South Gundagai

Estimated cost: \$31m over 5 years

Purpose: Gocup Road is the primary connection between Tumut and the Hume Highway corridor at South Gundagai, and is:

- the principal vehicular route for all traffic to and from Tumut;
- the primary heavy vehicle route for over 80% (2.3 million tonnes) of the manufactured timber products for domestic and export markets;
- increasingly used as a heavy vehicle route for incoming raw materials for timber manufacturing.

The project proposal is to reconstruct the 30.1km length of Gocup Road to current RTA design standards from Tumut to South Gundagai over the next five years.



Bega Bypass:

Estimated Additional Cost: approx \$85m (\$68m from Federal Government and \$17m from NSW State Government)

The Federal Government has allocated \$30m towards this project. It requires a further input of approx \$55m, of which \$17m is to come from the NSW State Government and the rest has been promised as an election undertaking in 2010 from the Federal Government. It is imperative that this project is completed within the next two years.

Princes Highway – South Batemans Bay

Estimated Cost: \$40m

This proposal involves the realignment of the Princes Highway immediately south of Batemans Bay including the provision of a grade separated junction with the new South Batemans Bay Link Road.

The aim is to address the poor alignment and safety issues associated with this section of the Princes Highway. Importantly, intersection upgrades to an existing poor intersection will allow new and direct transport connections to the new South Batemans Bay Bypass Road connecting the Princes Highway to Surf Beach bulky goods development lands, as well as the rapidly expanding suburbs beyond. The Surf Beach bulky goods development is anticipated to generate over 300 long term jobs plus numerous construction jobs in the short term. This is a key issue in assisting to lower the current unemployment rate in Eurobodalla Shire (which currently sits at over 11%).

The works would also address major safety concerns with the junction of the Princes Highway and Lattas Point Road which services the Clyde River oyster industry. This industry has expressed concerns for the safety of its operators at a time when they are seeking to expand their industry and pursue new markets.

South Batemans Bay Link Road

Estimated Cost: \$8.5m

Council has already allocated \$1.2m in 2010/11 for stage one for the construction of the link and seeks government assistance in completing this strategic piece of transport infrastructure.

This 2.8km length of road forms a link between the Princes Highway and the new South Batemans Bay Bypass (now known as George Bass Drive).

This vital link will provide direct access for transport from the Princes Highway to the new Surf Beach bulky goods development. This development is a key strategy in addressing the

very high unemployment within Eurobodalla (currently sitting at over 11%). This road will also relieve the significant traffic loads from Beach Road and the residential areas of Batehaven, Catalina, and Batemans Bay.

Delegate to the Border Road (MR 930):

Estimated Cost: \$2.1m

This is the road leading to the Delegate River Bridge. At present there are 7kms of road that need realigning and sealing. MR93 is the primary traffic route for farming communities of Mt Koolabbbbra, Bendoc South, Dellicknora, Bonang, Cabanandra, and Tubbut to access the service towns of Delegate, Bombala, and Cooma.

Willmotts Forests plan to bring 100,000 tonnes of timber from their Cabanandra Forest softwood plantation along this route during an 18 month period to process plants at Bombala and Tumut. The current bridge has a 30 tonne gross load limit. This cannot handle the anticipated timber activity and requires the building of a bridge upstream of the present site.

The Bombala Shire Council consider this project to be their Number One priority.

Delegate River Bridge:

Estimated Cost: \$1.78m

The bridge, over the Delegate River on MR93 approx 13kms south west of Delegate, is on the primary traffic route for farming communities of Mt Koolabbbbra, Bendoc South, Dellicknora, Bonang, Cabanandra, and Tubbut to access the service towns of Delegate, Bombala, and Cooma.

Willmotts Forests plan to bring 100,000 tonnes of timber from their Cabanandra Forest softwood plantation along this route during an 18 month period to process plants at Bombala and Tumut. The current bridge has a 30 tonne gross load limit. This cannot handle the anticipated timber activity and requires the building of a bridge upstream of the present site.

Bibbenluke – Cathcart:

Estimated Cost: \$3.84m

MR563 runs between the rural villages of Bibbenluke and Cathcart approx 14kms north east of Bombala. The road is 9.6kms long and it forms part of a primary link between the Sapphire Coast and the Snowy Mountains. The project involves the reconstruction and bitumen sealing the full length of MR563 to two lane rural road standard. The sealing would complete the coast to mountain route and offer the growing tourist traffic in south eastern Australia an alternative route. MR563 feeds directly into MR91 from the Monaro Highway with timber from Nimmitabel, Dalgety, and Kangaroo Camp areas and livestock from Ando, Bibbenluke, Bungarby, and Nimmitabel areas transported over this road to access shipping, processing and sale points on the coast.

Princes Highway – Traralgon-Sale

Estimated cost: \$500m (\$175m already allocated)

This project is to duplicate the 51km section from Traralgon to Sale to provide a four lane divided highway. Where possible the existing road reserve will be utilised however additional road reserve will be required to accommodate a divided road and minimise impact on native vegetation in a number of locations.

Alignment options will need to be considered as part of the detailed design phase.



Gippsland Logistics Precinct (Morwell)

Purpose: In 2002, Latrobe City Council acquired a 64 hectare site three kilometres east of the Morwell CBD, adjacent to the existing, underutilised, Gippsland Intermodal Freight Terminal (GIFT). The site was purchased for the strategic purpose of developing an expanded (GLP) to service the Latrobe Valley and the Gippsland region.

The Gippsland Logistics Precinct shall:

1. offer fair and equitable access to the terminal for all enterprises regardless of commercial arrangement;
2. provide open access between the GIFT and the adjacent 64ha site including preserving the potential for construction of rail spurs into the GLP;
3. be fundamentally a rail focused terminal with other modes, being road and potentially air, providing a supplementary but subordinate role; and
4. be controlled via a long term lease held by Latrobe City Council.

Goulburn Intermodal

Estimated Cost: To be advised

Purpose: The NSW Government has approved the establishment of major freight hubs with rail and Hume Highway access to the northern and southern boundaries of the city. Goulburn Airport makes Goulburn the only south east Australian region centre outside the Sydney metropolitan area with the capacity to develop a road–rail–air intermodal.

Canberra Airport Freight Precinct

Estimated Cost: Private and corporate investment

Purpose: The Canberra Airport has the objective of maximising its contribution to the region’s economy as well as its ongoing development as a regional multi-modal transport hub. Development as a freight hub and light industrial technology park is well advanced.

South Gippsland Highway upgrade – Lang Lang-Sale

Estimated cost: \$56.9m for Sale to Longford, other project costs to be scoped and determined.

Purpose: Upgrading of the Highway to “A” road standard, from Lang Lang to Sale, generally along the existing alignment. The project also includes town bypasses, improvements to vertical and horizontal alignment, and provision of overtaking lanes.

The current project is the upgrading and flood protection on the Sale to Longford section of the highway (Cox’s Bridge). Works are expected to commence by the end of 2013 for this section.



Bass Highway duplication – Lang Lang-Anderson

Estimated cost: \$40m for stage 7

Purpose: Duplication (upgrade) of the Highway from the South Gippsland Highway at Lang Lang to the roundabout at Anderson.

Some sections have already been duplicated with work currently in progress on other sections. The proposed work is for the provision of a four lane divided Highway.

Works for the section Grantville to south of King Road were completed mid 2009 with the section King Road to Woolmer Road estimated to be completed by mid 2010.

Planning is well advanced for the section Woolmer Road to Phillip Island Road with the concept being to provide a new 3 km link between the Bass Highway and a point 2.5 km along the Phillip Island Road. Works are anticipated to start in late 2010.



Bass Highway – Anderson-Leongatha

Estimated cost: Anderson to Wonthaggi \$10m-\$40m; Wonthaggi to Inverloch \$6m-\$20m; Inverloch to Leongatha \$10m-\$50m

Purpose: The Lang Lang to Anderson section of the Bass Highway will by 2011 be completed to a 4 lane divided road.

The balance of the highway covering a distance of 55km is proposed as two lanes with improvements to road pavement, widening to at least “B” road standard, provision of sealed shoulders (Inverloch to Leongatha), provision of overtaking opportunities (Anderson to Inverloch) and safety improvements.



Koo Wee Rup Road

Estimated cost: \$40m (Koo Wee Rup bypass only)

Purpose: To ultimately provide a freeway standard linkage along the Koo Wee Rup Road corridor from Pakenham Bypass to South Gippsland Highway (including a Bypass of the Koo Wee Rup township).

In the interim VicRoads intends to duplicate the existing Koo Wee Rup Road and construct a bypass of the township.

Tooradin-Baxter Road

Estimated cost: Not currently available

Purpose: The road section that is the subject of this proposal links the South Gippsland Highway to the Peninsular Freeway, which is already a very significant connection, and will become even more so in the near future. The impending upgrade of the Port of Hastings and the Stony Point to Cowes car ferry will significantly increase both the volume and size of vehicles using this route.

Leongatha Heavy Vehicle alternative route

Purpose: This project seeks to develop a heavy vehicle bypass for Leongatha, the largest town in South Gippsland Shire

Council has approved the route for the Leongatha heavy vehicle route.

The next step for the Leongatha heavy vehicle bypass route is to commence detailed route and intersection design with VicRoads and to seek State/Federal Government funding for the project.



Strategic Study Projects

Cross border issues (includes timber roads, heavy vehicle and regulation issues)

Estimated cost of study: \$200,000

Purpose: A study to identify policy, regulatory, safety and transport network issues that have an impact on the efficient and effective cross border movement of freight and to propose solutions.

The study to include identifying and proposing solutions to government, to eliminate irregularities in government policies and regulations, to allow vehicles to be manufactured, configured and loaded in such a way to be legal in all states.

The study also to investigate and evaluate the adequacy of the local and regional road network within the SEATS region to service the harvesting of timber from public and private forests and the delivery of logs to places of production, processing or ports.

The study will be used to develop a strategic policy to assist government (local, state & national) to formulate a funding formula to develop and maintain the network of rural/regional timber roads and to formulate consistent cross border policies and regulations.

Victorian School Bus System

Purpose: To make changes to the Victorian school bus system to allow the carrying of other fare paying passengers. The study has been completed and has Municipal Association Victoria (MAV) and Gippsland Local Government Network (GLGN) support.

Under the School Bus Flexibility Project, trials have been conducted in Gippsland over the last two years. Advocacy for the adoption of eight recommendations, arising from the trials, for the State Government to streamline access to school buses for rural Victorians to better facilitate carriage of the general public, post secondary students and access to school buses is required.



MR92 Beyond Nerriga (Study of alternative routes)

Estimated Cost of Study: \$200,000

Purpose: Crossing of this Illawarra escarpment south west of Nowra is only possible in a limited number of places, with the crossings having varying degrees of suitability for heavy vehicles.

Shoalhaven City Council, the NSW RTA with financial assistance from the Federal Government will by 2011 have completed a crossing based on Main Road 92 from Nowra on the coast to Nerriga on the southern tablelands.

To complete this major network improvement to connect to the highway corridors beyond Nerriga is now required.

NEW SOUTH WALES ISSUES

PREAMBLE

All levels of government need to accept responsibility to ensure that a pro-active, co-operative strategic direction is in place to enable delivery of improvements to and upgrade of the transport infrastructure needs in the south eastern region of Australia. This issue is a fundamental platform advocated by SEATS to all Governments in our region

Partnership plans need to be developed between Federal and State Governments to allow agreement on projects of critical importance for transport efficiency for regional development and growth.

It is apparent that communities throughout Australia want co-operative policies adopted by Federal, State and Local Government to ensure the delivery of best practice to the electorate. It is also apparent that communities are looking for timely, well-planned and properly constructed upgrades of transport infrastructure projects.

Politically appealing rhetoric of shifting responsibility of project delivery from one government to another is no longer appropriate. It has become increasingly apparent that projects which have the full cooperation of local, state and federal government and community and industry groups are preferred.

POLICY ISSUES

SEATS commends the New South Wales Government on its delivery of improved transport infrastructure in metropolitan Sydney, the North Coast and the western corridor and in the Kiama and Shoalhaven regions.

SEATS believes that:

- **The NSW Government should develop network improvement plans based upon 5, 10 and 20 year horizons.**
- **The Road Classification review process should be undertaken on a more regular and timely basis.**
- **The NSW Government should follow through on its commitment to develop the port of Port Kembla and improve the associated infrastructure to deliver the maximum benefit to the region.**

- **SEATS believes that the NSW Government should develop network improvement plans based upon 5, 10 and 20 year horizons.** SEATS will support State agencies in the preparation of forward work programs for infrastructure upgrades by the announcement of funding on a five year basis. This position will enable suitable longer-term project to be delivered in a timely fashion and project confidence within the investment industry.
- **SEATS believes that the Road Classification review process should be undertaken on a more regular and timely basis.** SEATS recognises that the RTA, as part of the roads classification review, is currently attempting to move about 500kms of State roads to a Regional road classification. This has a significant impact on local government operations and budgets.
- **SEATS seeks the NSW Government to follow through on its commitment to develop the port of Port Kembla and improve the associated infrastructure to deliver the maximum benefit to the region. The fact that Federal Government does not recognise the Princes Highway from the gates to Wollongong University to Traralgon in Victoria is not acceptable.** This project is particularly important now that Port Kembla is the sole entry and exit point for all cars coming into or going from NSW. The planned expansion of the Port is now an established fact and as such transport infrastructure improvements (both rail and road) are urgently required.

SEATS believes that:

- **A boat harbour strategy should be developed for the south coast of NSW to enhance commercial and recreational activities.**
- **Adequate planning and funding be undertaken to improve rail access to the national grids.**
- **Policy changes be made to enable interstate passenger buses to pick up and set down intrastate passengers within New South Wales.**
- **The NSW and Victorian Governments should establish a joint industry advisory committee to resolve issues affecting the safe transportation of products within NSW and between NSW and Victoria.**
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- **SEATS seeks a boat harbour strategy for the south coast of NSW to enhance commercial and recreational activities.** A minor ports development program will deliver economic benefit to the residents and visitors.
- **SEATS seeks adequate planning and funding to improve rail access to the national grids.** This would enhance the economic attractiveness of the regions around Wollongong, Nowra and Goulburn and Canberra.
- **SEATS requests that policy changes be made to existing NSW Department of Motor Transport rules to enable interstate passenger buses to pick up and set down intrastate passengers within New South Wales.**
- **SEATS believes that the NSW and Victorian Governments should establish a joint industry advisory committee to resolve issues affecting the safe transportation of products within NSW and between NSW and Victoria.** This body would also be requested to determine a workable policy to enable the development of a funding formula to adequately recompense local government authorities for the use and maintenance of timber roads.
- **SEATS requests that the NSW Government develop a funding program to provide for the replacement of timber bridges.** The Gippsland Transport Study identified this as an important issue within this region of Victoria requiring attention over the next five years. A similar process should be adopted in New South Wales.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

Road Issues (NSW)

SEATS believes that corridor plans should be developed for the Monaro Highway identifying major and minor works on a work plan for 5 years, 10 years, 15 years etc including identifying the basic scope of the work and the timing of such work. It commends the RTA for having recently commenced such studies for the Princes and Kings Highway.

SEATS has identified the following road transport projects as priorities within south eastern Australia and requests that these projects be undertaken:

Infrastructure Projects

SEATS reviewed its priority projects for inclusion in funding programs in late 2009. The following projects were selected because of their regional importance:

Picton Road

Estimated cost: \$ Unknown at this stage

Purpose: Funding provided for safety improvements has been made available, including line marking, signage, upgrading of selected sections of road, and curve and shoulder improvements. Further improvements to alignment, in addition to the current \$12m project, are required to address the high incidence of accidents on this road.

Princes Highway – Gerringong-Bomaderry realignment

Estimated Cost: \$800m

Purpose: To realign and widen the Princes Highway between Mount Pleasant (north of Gerringong) and the urban area of Bomaderry - a distance of 32 kilometres. This upgrade will replace the existing single lane carriageway that crosses the Foxground ridge and has poor horizontal and vertical alignment with little overtaking opportunities with a dual lane carriageway divided in its entire length by various forms of traffic management engineering structures. Already the route has been the subject of extensive engineering and environmental analysis and community consultation. Various route options were considered with a final route now having been determined.



Princes Highway – South Nowra duplication

Estimated cost: \$70m

Purpose: To upgrade the existing Princes Highway single carriageway from the southern end of the Nowra residential area, through the South Nowra growing industrial precinct and connect to the recently upgraded 4 lane divided carriageway at Forest Road Falls Creek - a distance of 6.3kms.

The project will deliver a divided carriageway having a combination of 2/3 lanes in both a northerly and southerly direction. This configuration should also deliver adequate options at each intersection appropriate to the type of catchment (including b-doubles) to be serviced now and into the anticipated future.

Some realignment and reconfiguration of side streets may need to be undertaken to minimise the number of intersections to maximise the priority to through traffic but not to the detriment of providing "last mile" connectivity.

Kings Highway – Batemans Bay-Braidwood

Estimated cost: \$46.3m

Purpose: This project involves the reconstruction and realignment of sections of the Kings Highway between Batemans Bay and west of Northanger Bridge (east of Braidwood). The desired outcome is the provision of consistent lane widths of 3.5m minimum with lane widening on curves for heavy transport vehicles and sealed shoulders widths of 1.0-3.0m on both sides and with sufficient overtaking opportunities to better manage use of the route by transport vehicles during normal times and peak hourly traffic volumes occurring weekly on Friday, Saturday and Sunday as well as throughout the peak summer and school holiday periods. Sub-standard curves need to be realigned to increase safety along this length of Highway. In some cases the realignment will require the acquisition of land from private land holders as well as from National Park.



Princes Highway – Victoria Creek realignment

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Purpose: The proposal is to improve the highway alignment and provide a wider bridge.

The current highway has poor alignment and narrow formation with poor overtaking opportunities. Archaeological investigations have been completed together with geotechnical and utility surveys. A concept design has also been completed. Funding is allocated for planning work.



Princes Highway – Dignams Creek realignment

Estimated cost: \$70m

Purpose: The proposal is for road realignment with new bridge at Dignams Creek. Investigations into possible realignments are in progress with possible routes being identified. The need for an aboriginal focus group has been identified. Funding is allocated for planning work.



Gocup Road - Tumut-South Gundagai

Estimated cost: \$31m over 5 years

Purpose: The Gocup Road is the primary connection between Tumut and the Hume Highway corridor at South Gundagai, and is:

- the principal vehicular route for all traffic to and from Tumut;
- the primary heavy vehicle route for over 80% (2.3 million tonnes) of the manufactured timber products for domestic and export markets;
- increasingly used as a heavy vehicle route for incoming raw materials for timber manufacturing.

The project proposal is to reconstruct the 30.1km length of Gocup Road to current RTA design standards from Tumut to South Gundagai over the next five years.



MR92 Beyond Nerriga (Study of alternative routes)

Estimated Cost of Study: \$200,000

Purpose: Crossing of this Illawarra escarpment south west of Nowra is only possible in a limited number of places, with the crossings having varying degrees of suitability for heavy vehicles.

Shoalhaven City Council, the NSW RTA with financial assistance from the Federal government will by 2011 have completed a crossing based on Main Road 92 from Nowra on the coast to Nerriga on the southern tablelands.

To complete this major network improvement to connect to the highway corridors beyond Nerriga is now required.

Princes Highway bypassing of Bega

A preferred option has been identified for a Bega Bypass for heavy vehicles to be taken away from the Bega township providing safety, amenity, efficiency benefits and provision of B-Double access.

The Federal Government has allocated \$30m towards this project. It requires a further input of approx \$55m, of which \$17m is to come from the NSW State Government and the rest has been promised as an election undertaking in 2010 from the Federal Government. It is imperative that this project is completed within the next two years.

Port Issues (NSW)

SEATS is pleased that certain announcements have been made with adequate funding provided to allow for Port Kembla to become a significant port of entry for motor vehicles.

SEATS has identified the following sea transport projects as priorities within south eastern Australia and requests that the following projects be undertaken:

- Port Kembla.
- The announced and necessary upgrades to establish Port Kembla as an alternative container port to Botany be delivered by 2024.
- Boat Harbour Strategy.
- A Boat Harbour Strategy for coastal New South Wales should be developed by the end of 2015 to cater for increased recreational and touring demand along the coast.

Port Kembla upgrade

Estimated Cost: \$660m (Stage 1: \$97m)

Purpose: To reclaim approximately 52 hectares of land within the outer harbour for the construction of seven new berths. The project can be staged and as such will be developed based on demand.

Importantly the project will be able to handle the overflow of containers from Port Botany once Port Botany reaches capacity in 2024 or sooner.



Rail Issues (NSW)

SEATS believes that adequate planning and funding should be given to improve the ability of rail transport to and from Port Kembla from various parts of New South Wales. This could see linkages between Port Kembla and western New South Wales. Such planning would ensure the longer term viability of Port Kembla and provide relief on the already overburdened road transport network in the Sydney urban area.

It is imperative that there is sufficient capacity on the rail network to provide for the growth in freight which would otherwise go by road.

SEATS has identified the following rail transport projects as priorities within south eastern Australia and requests that the following projects be undertaken:

- More commuting from areas between Nowra and Wollongong into Wollongong and Sydney each day would take pressure off the Highway and off the Sutherland area particularly. The upgrading of rail services should be undertaken in at least the 2012-2015 period.
- An upgrade and significant maintenance program being undertaken on the entire rail network between Sydney and Bomaderry.

Air Transport Issues (NSW)

With many regional airports and rural airports being maintained by local government it is becoming increasingly urgent for funding to upgrade the tarmac at certain airports is forthcoming.

SEATS has identified the following air transport issues as priorities within south eastern Australia and requests that the following projects be undertaken:

- Some airports such as Moruya and Merimbula will require significant upgrades in the next five to eight years. This is beyond the ability of the responsible Councils and requires some action by both Federal and State Government by 2012 – 2015.
- SEATS requests that the State Government seek support from the Federal Government to assist with strengthening of regional airport runways to meet existing and new loadings.

Other Policy Issues (NSW)

SEATS believes that the Victorian and NSW Governments should establish a joint industry advisory committee to resolve issues affecting the safe transportation of timber products within Victoria and between Victoria and NSW.

This body would also be requested to determine a workable policy to enable the industry to adequately recompense local government authorities for the use and maintenance of timber roads.

SEATS seeks to be involved in this study group.

Supported projects (letter of support)

Bega Bypass:

Estimated Additional Cost: approx \$85m (\$68m from Federal Government and \$17m from NSW State Government)

The Federal Government has allocated \$30m towards this project. It requires a further input of approx \$55m, of which \$17m is to come from the NSW State Government and the rest has been promised as an election undertaking in 2010 from the Federal Government. It is imperative that this project is completed within the next two years.

Princes Highway – South Batemans Bay

Estimated Cost: \$40m

This proposal involves the realignment of the Princes Highway immediately south of Batemans Bay including the provision of a grade separated junction with the new South Batemans Bay Link Road.

The aim is to address the poor alignment and safety issues associated with this section of the Princes Highway. Importantly, intersection upgrades to an existing poor intersection will allow new and direct transport connections to the new South Batemans Bay Bypass Road connecting the Princes Highway to Surf Beach bulky goods development lands, as well as the rapidly expanding suburbs beyond. The Surf Beach bulky goods development is anticipated to generate over 300 long term jobs plus numerous construction jobs in the short term. This is a key issue in assisting to lower the current unemployment rate in Eurobodalla Shire (which currently sits at over 11%).

The works would also address major safety concerns with the junction of the Princes Highway and Lattas Point Road which services the Clyde River oyster industry. This industry has expressed concerns for the safety of its operators at a time when they are seeking to expand their industry and pursue new markets.

South Batemans Bay Link Road

Estimated Cost: \$8.5m

Council has already allocated \$1.2m in 2010/11 for stage one for the construction of the link and seeks government assistance in completing this strategic piece of transport infrastructure.

This 2.8km length of road forms a link between the Princes Highway and the new South Batemans Bay Bypass (now known as George Bass Drive).

This vital link will provide direct access for transport from the Princes Highway to the new Surf Beach bulky goods development. This development is a key strategy in addressing the very high unemployment within Eurobodalla (currently sitting at over 11%). This road will also relieve the significant traffic loads from Beach Road and the residential areas of Batehaven, Catalina, and Batemans Bay.

Delegate to the Border Road (MR 930):

Estimated Cost: \$2.1m

This is the road leading to the Delegate River Bridge. At present there are 7kms of road that need realigning and sealing. MR93 is the primary traffic route for farming communities of Mt Koolabbbra, Bendoc South, Dellicknora, Bonang, Cabanandra, and Tubbut to access the service towns of Delegate, Bombala, and Cooma.

Willmotts Forests plan to bring 100,000 tonnes of timber from their Cabanandra Forest softwood plantation along this route during an 18 month period to process plants at Bombala and Tumut. The current bridge has a 30 tonne gross load limit. This cannot handle the anticipated timber activity and requires the building of a bridge upstream of the present site.

The Bombala Shire Council consider this project to be their Number One priority.

Delegate River Bridge:

Estimated Cost: \$1.78m

The bridge, over the Delegate River on MR93 approx 13kms south west of Delegate, is on the primary traffic route for farming communities of Mt Koolabbbra, Bendoc South, Dellicknora, Bonang, Cabanandra, and Tubbut to access the service towns of Delegate, Bombala, and Cooma.

Willmotts Forests plan to bring 100,000 tonnes of timber from their Cabanandra Forest softwood plantation along this route during an 18 month period to process plants at Bombala and Tumut. The current bridge has a 30 tonne gross load limit. This cannot handle the anticipated timber activity and requires the building of a bridge upstream of the present site.

Bibbenluke – Cathcart:

Estimated Cost: \$3.84m

MR563 runs between the rural villages of Bibbenluke and Cathcart approx 14kms north east of Bombala. The road is 9.6kms long and it forms part of a primary link between the Sapphire Coast and the Snowy Mountains. The project involves the reconstruction and bitumen sealing the full length of MR563 to two lane rural road standard. The sealing would complete the coast to mountain route and offer the growing tourist traffic in south eastern Australia an alternative route. MR563 feeds directly into MR91 from the Monaro Highway with timber from Nimmitabel, Dalgety, and Kangaroo Camp areas and livestock from Ando, Bibbenluke, Bungarby, and Nimmitabel areas transported over this road to access shipping, processing and sale points on the coast.

VICTORIAN ISSUES

PREAMBLE

All levels of government need to accept responsibility to ensure that a pro-active, co-operative strategic direction is in place to enable delivery of improvements to and upgrade of the transport infrastructure needs in the south eastern region of Australia. This issue is a fundamental platform advocated by SEATS to all Governments in our region

Partnership plans need to be developed between Federal and State Governments to allow agreement on projects of critical importance for transport efficiency for regional development and growth.

It is apparent that communities throughout Australia want co-operative policies adopted by Federal, State and Local Government to ensure the delivery of best practice to the electorate. It is also apparent that communities are looking for timely, well-planned and properly constructed upgrades of transport infrastructure projects.

Politically appealing rhetoric of shifting responsibility of project delivery from one government to another is no longer appropriate. It has become increasingly apparent that projects which have the full cooperation of local, state and federal government and community and industry groups are preferred.

POLICY ISSUES

SEATS commends the Victorian Government on its delivery of improved transport infrastructure in metropolitan Melbourne and in south eastern Victoria.

SEATS believes that:

- **The Victorian Government should maintain and enhance its commitment to the network improvement plans based upon 5, 10 and 20 year horizons.**
 - **There should be a continuing funding commitment from the Victorian Government for the timely development of transport infrastructure around the growth areas of Dandenong, Cardinia and Casey local government areas.**
 - **The Port of Hastings be developed and the associated infrastructure, including road and rail connections be improved to deliver the maximum benefit to the region.**
- **SEATS believes that the Victorian Government should maintain and enhance its commitment to the network improvement plans based upon 5, 10 and 20 year horizons.** SEATS will support State agencies in the preparation of forward work programs for infrastructure upgrades by the announcement of funding on a five year basis. This position will enable suitable longer-term projects to be delivered in a timely fashion and project confidence within the investment industry.
 - **SEATS seeks continuing funding commitment from the Victorian Government for the timely development of transport infrastructure around the growth areas of Dandenong, Cardinia and Casey local government areas.** The rapid growth of this region demands immediate action from government with regard to all forms of transport infrastructure. SEATS is concerned that the planning for much of this network has been shelved and seeks planning funds to be immediately restored.
 - **SEATS seeks the Victorian Government to develop the Port of Hastings and improve the associated infrastructure, including road and rail connections to deliver the maximum benefit to the region.**

SEATS believes that:

- Adequate planning and funding be available to develop intermodal infrastructure and to improve freight and passenger rail access to the national grids at Melbourne.
- Policy changes be made to existing Victorian regulations to enable interstate passenger buses and local school buses to pick up and set down intrastate passengers within Victoria.
- The Victorian and NSW Governments should establish a joint industry advisory committee to resolve issues affecting the safe transportation of products within Victoria and between Victoria and NSW.
- The Victorian Government should develop a funding program to provide for the replacement of timber bridges.

- SEATS seeks adequate planning and funding to develop intermodal infrastructure and to improve freight and passenger rail access to the national grids at Melbourne. This would enhance the economic attractiveness of the south and central Gippsland. The Gippsland Logistics Precinct proposal developed by Latrobe City Council is considered a most innovative and advanced plan for the delivery of a modern and technologically efficient distribution hub.
- SEATS requests that policy changes be made to existing Victorian regulations to enable interstate passenger buses and local school buses to pick up and set down intrastate passengers within Victoria.
- SEATS believes that the Victorian and NSW Governments should establish a joint industry advisory committee to resolve issues affecting the safe transportation of products within Victoria and between Victoria and NSW. This body would also be requested to determine a workable policy to enable the development of a funding formula to adequately recompense local government authorities for the use and maintenance of timber roads. *This is a SEATS priority project.*
- SEATS requests that the Victorian Government develop a funding program to provide for the replacement of timber bridges. The Gippsland Transport Study identified this as an important issue within this region of Victoria requiring attention over the next five years.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

SEATS believes that network development plans should be developed for the Gippsland and south east Melbourne identifying major and minor works on a work plan for 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, etc including identifying the basic scope of the work and the timing of such work.

Road Issues (Vic)

SEATS has identified the following road transport projects as priorities within south eastern Australia and requests that these projects be undertaken:

Princes Highway – Traralgon-Sale

Estimated cost: \$500m (\$175m already allocated)

Purpose: This project is to duplicate the 51km section from Traralgon to Sale to provide a four lane divided highway. Where possible the existing road reserve will be utilised, however additional road reserve will be required to accommodate a divided road and minimise impact on native vegetation in a number of locations. Alignment options will need to be considered as part of the detailed design phase.



South Gippsland Highway upgrade – Lang Lang-Sale

Estimated cost: \$56.9m for Sale to Longford, other project costs to be scoped and determined.

Purpose: Upgrading of the Highway to “A” road standard, from Lang Lang to Sale, generally along the existing alignment. Also including town bypasses, improvements to vertical and horizontal alignment, and provision of overtaking lanes.

The current project is the upgrading and flood protection on the Sale to Longford section of the highway (Cox’s Bridge). Works are expected to commence by the end of 2013 for this section.



Bass Highway duplication – Lang Lang-Anderson

Estimated cost: \$40m for stage 7

Purpose: Duplication (upgrade) of the Highway from the South Gippsland Highway at Lang Lang to the roundabout at Anderson. Some sections have already been duplicated with work currently in progress on other sections. The proposed work is for the provision of a four lane divided Highway.

Works for the section Grantville to south of King Road were completed mid 2009 with the section King Road to Woolmer Road estimated to be completed by mid 2010.

Planning is well advanced for the section Woolmer Road to Phillip Island Road with the concept being to provide a new 3km link between the Bass Highway and a point 2.5km along the Phillip Island Road. Works are anticipated to start in late 2010.



Bass Highway – Anderson-Leongatha

Estimated cost: Anderson to Wonthaggi \$10m-\$40m; Wonthaggi to Inverloch \$6m-\$20m; Inverloch to Leongatha \$10m-\$50m.

Purpose: The Lang Lang to Anderson section of the Bass Highway will by 2011 be completed to a four lane divided road. The balance of the highway covering a distance of 55km is proposed as two lanes with improvements to, road pavement, widening to at least “B” road standard, provision of sealed shoulders (Inverloch to Leongatha), provision of overtaking opportunities (Anderson to Inverloch) and safety improvements.



Koo Wee Rup Road

Estimated cost: \$40m (Koo Wee Rup bypass only)

Purpose: To ultimately provide a freeway standard linkage along the Koo Wee Rup Road corridor from Pakenham Bypass to South Gippsland Highway (including a Bypass of the Koo Wee Rup township).

In the interim VicRoads intends to duplicate the existing Koo Wee Rup Road and construct a bypass of the township.

Tooradin-Baxter Road

Estimated cost: Not currently available

Purpose: The road section that is the subject of this proposal links the South Gippsland Highway to the Peninsular Freeway, which is already a very significant connection, and will become even more so in the near future. The impending upgrade of the Port of Hastings and the Stony Point to Cowes car ferry will increase both the volume and size of vehicles using this route significantly.

Leongatha Heavy Vehicle alternative route

Purpose: This project seeks to develop a heavy vehicle bypass for Leongatha, the largest town in South Gippsland Shire.

Council has approved the route for the Leongatha heavy vehicle route.

The next step for the Leongatha heavy vehicle bypass route is to commence detailed route and intersection design with VicRoads and to seek State/Federal Government funding for the project.



Intermodal Development

Gippsland Logistics Precinct (Morwell)

Purpose: In 2002, Latrobe City Council acquired a 64 hectare site three kilometres east of the Morwell CBD, adjacent to the existing, underutilised, Gippsland Intermodal Freight Terminal (GIFT). The site was purchased for the strategic purpose of developing an expanded (GLP) to service the Latrobe Valley and the Gippsland region.

The Gippsland Logistics Precinct shall:

1. offer fair and equitable access to the terminal for all enterprises regardless of commercial arrangement;
2. provide open access between the GIFT and the adjacent 64ha site including preserving the potential for construction of rail spurs into the GLP;
3. be fundamentally a rail focused terminal with other modes, being road and potentially air, providing a supplementary but subordinate role; and
4. be controlled via a long term lease held by Latrobe City Council.

Strategic Study Projects

Cross border issues (includes timber roads, heavy vehicle and regulation issues)

Estimated cost of study: \$200,000

Purpose: A study to identify policy, regulatory and transport network issues that have an impact on the efficient and effective cross border movement of freight and to propose solutions.

The study to include identifying and proposing solutions to government, to eliminate irregularities in government policies and regulations, to allow vehicles to be manufactured, configured and loaded in such a way to be legal in all states.

The study also to investigate and evaluate the adequacy of the local and regional road network within the SEATS region to service the harvesting of timber from public and private forests and the delivery of logs to places of production, processing or ports. The study will be used to develop a strategic policy to assist government (local, state & national) to formulate a funding formula to develop and maintain the network of rural/regional timber roads and to formulate consistent cross border policies and regulations.

Victorian School Bus System

Purpose: To make changes to the Victorian school bus system to allow the carrying of other fare paying passengers. The study has been completed and has Municipal Association Victoria (MAV) and Gippsland Local Government Network (GLGN) support. Under the School Bus Flexibility Project, trials have been conducted in Gippsland over the last two years. Advocacy for the adoption of eight recommendations, arising from the trials, for the State Government to streamline access to school buses for rural Victorians to better facilitate carriage of the general public, post secondary students and access to school buses is required.



Rail Issues (Vic)

SEATS recognises the vast array of necessary projects required in the Victorian rail network both passenger and freight rail. SEATS recommends and commends the planned Dandenong 3rd rail line.

Port Issues (Vic)

It is requested that consideration be given to access to Port Melbourne and to Port of Hastings with appropriate rail connections. This is becoming increasingly important to allow for wanted expansion of intermodals in the Narre Warren, Bairnsdale and Sale regions. It is also necessary to plan for inland ports in the City of Casey and Dandenong areas

Other Policy Issues (Vic)

SEATS in conjunction with the Gippsland Local Government Network supports the Gippsland Logistic Precinct and seeks funding for the plan, design, development of this important infrastructure.

Air Transport Issues (Vic)

SEATS seeks further development of Latrobe, West Sale and Bairnsdale Airports to enable further employment opportunities.

With many regional airports and rural airports being maintained by local government, it is becoming increasingly urgent for funding to upgrade the tarmac at certain airports is forthcoming.

SEATS has identified the following air transport issues as priorities within south eastern Australia and requests that the following projects be undertaken:

- Some airports such as Latrobe, West Sale and Bairnsdale will require significant upgrades in the next five to eight years. This is beyond the ability of the responsible Councils and requires some action by both Federal and State Government by 2012 – 2015.
- SEATS requests that the State Government seek support from the Federal Government to assist with strengthening of regional airport runways to meet existing and new loadings.

Supported Projects (letter of support)

Lang Lang Bypass:

Estimated Cost: Stage 1 \$3m, Stage 2 \$3.5m - totalling \$6.5m

The Lang Lang region contains significant sand resources making it of State economic importance. As a result of sand extraction to cope with current demand, considerable traffic traverses through Lang Lang town centre. The Bypass proposes a two lane two way carriageway diverting traffic around Lang Lang at Westernport Road east of the township and reconnecting with Westernport Road west of the town.

Signalisation of Princes Freeway and Old Princes Highway intersection at Beaconsfield:

Estimated Cost: \$1m

The inability of Beaconsfield residents to directly access the new Pakenham Bypass (Princes Freeway) results in congestion through Berwick. Signalisation at this intersection was originally planned but was not undertaken.

McGregor Road duplication from Pakenham Bypass to Princes Highway:

Estimated Cost: \$6.7m

McGregor Road is identified in the Victorian State Government's "Growth Area Framework Plan 2006" as an arterial road providing access from Pakenham Bypass to the residential and business districts with the Urban Growth Boundary. This framework also recognizes McGregor Road is an important link from the Pakenham Bypass to the proposed employment precinct south of the freeway.

References

Gippsland Transport Study 2005	Meyrick and Associates	August
Princes Highway Economic and Social Significance Studies 2005	Sd&D (on behalf NRMA, PHocus and SEATS)	August and September
Kings Highway Study 2005	NRMA	September
Australian Capital Region Road Transport Priorities Study 2000	Maunsell McIntyre Pty Ltd	June
SEATS Strategic Network Document 2009	SEATS	November
SEATS Project Templates 2009	SEATS members	November

Website

www.seats.org.au