

**SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT STRATEGY INC.**



Chief Executive Officer  
Chris Vardon OAM  
PO Box 2106  
MALUA BAY NSW 2536  
Phone: 02 4471 1398  
Fax: 02 4471 3741  
Mobile: 0413 088 797  
Email: [seats@acr.net.au](mailto:seats@acr.net.au)

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# **NEW SOUTH WALES ELECTION POLICIES**

**2010 - 2011**

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## INTRODUCTION

South East Australian Transport Strategy Inc (SEATS) provides representation for a population of over 2 million people in one of the fastest growing regions of Australia. Timely transport solutions are absolutely vital to facilitating economic development and employment and in addressing existing transport network deficiencies.

SEATS has the responsibility to provide all major political parties involved in elections with some clear and definitive requests which our community wishes to see addressed as part of a good government role. 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 discussion with SEATS about the transport infrastructure needs in the south east area of Australia.

SEATS will, through the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Executive, and the SEATS Chief Executive Officer present these transport infrastructure proposals to the political parties in the coming months. On behalf of our community we wish to ensure that these issues are addressed by all political parties in their election manifesto. We also request that each candidate in each electorate give a clear undertaking to ensure that these issues are adequately addressed by whichever political party wins government.

We will work with you to formulate an appropriate action plan and then to implement that plan to the benefit of the communities which form the vibrant region of South Eastern Australia delivering significant economic development growth and employment opportunities to reduce the high levels of unemployment in all demographics.

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 matters are a cross border issues and will therefore be raised with all governments.

All projects raised within this document are currently priority projects adopted by SEATS in November 2009. Each project has a short description and further information about them may be obtained by consulting the SEATS website on [www.seats.org.au](http://www.seats.org.au).

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

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

## **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;**
  - **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.**
- **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 the Mount Pleasant (north of Gerringong) and the urban area of Bomaderry - a distance of 32 kilometres.



## 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 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 re-alignment will require the acquisition of land from private land holders as well as from National Park.



## Princes Highway – Victoria Creek realignment

**Estimated cost:** \$30m

**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:** \$45m

**Purpose:** The proposal is for road re-alignment with new bridge at Dignams Creek. Investigations into possible re-alignments are in progress with possible routes being identified. Funding is allocated for planning work. Funding for construction should be budgeted.



## 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 5 years.



## **Barton Highway - linking ACT and South Coast to Hume Highway at Yass**

**Estimated cost:** \$0.5 billion

**Purpose:** The project involves the duplication of 33km of road to provide dual carriageways from the Hume Highway at Yass to the existing dual carriageway at the ACT border. The project includes bypassing the village of Murrumbateman.

The Barton Highway connects the Hume Highway at Yass to the ACT and to the south coast area of NSW. Traffic volumes at the ACT end are 10,600 vehicles per day. Heavy vehicles amount to over 10% of traffic volumes.

The Australian Road Assessment Program rated all roads in the AusLink national network in 2007 and the Barton Highway rated as the worst highway in NSW for safety.

## **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. Funding of \$30million has been budgeted in Federal Budget of 2009/12 and further funding is required to complete the project. This work to be undertaken by 2012.

## 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 and 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.

### 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 7 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.

### **Supported Projects (letter of support)**

#### **Bega Bypass:**

Estimated additional cost: approx \$30m

The Federal Government has allocated \$30m towards this project and it requires a further input of approx \$30m to complete the project. 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.

## References

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

## Website

[www.seats.org.au](http://www.seats.org.au)