

# SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT STRATEGY INC.

# SEATS

SEATS provides highly co-ordinated and influential advocacy for the development of transport infrastructure in the South Eastern Australia region that supports economic development and the prosperity of its constituents.

## SEATS REPORT – February 2015

The quarterly meeting of SEATS was held on 19th and 20th February 2015 at Port Welshpool in Victoria.

The meeting was attended by over 40 delegates each day. SEATS members were welcomed by Mayor Cr Jeanette Harding and Mr Tim Tamlin CEO of South Gippsland Shire Council, hosts of the meeting. Mr Tamlin indicated that South Gippsland Shire Council believes that SEATS is an important part of their function and that membership of SEATS has been beneficial to their Shire. The Shire is very reliant on transport services.

South Gippsland Shire Council has been a valued member of SEATS for many years and it is encouraging that they are keen to expand their role with SEATS with Cr Harding now the Chair.

CEO Tim Tamlin, in addressing the delegates acknowledged the traditional owners of the land; past and present and thanked all delegates for coming from far and wide to attend the SEATS event. He hoped that there would be an opportunity to see and enjoy some of the natural beauty of Wilson's Prom and Region.

The Chair expressed sadness at the retirement of the outgoing Executive Officer Chris Vardon after nearly 12 years but was pleased with the appointment of his replacement John Duscher.

### John Duscher appointed Executive Officer of SEATS

John is well known to SEATS members as he served for 26 years as a councillor on the Bass Coast Shire Council, Mayor for four years and Deputy Mayor during that time. He was Deputy Chairman of SEATS in 1993 and continued as his Council delegate until 2012. He also served as a Victorian representative on the SEATS Executive on several occasions.

Currently he is a Board Director of Westernport Water and Community Representative on the Victorian Community Road Safety Alliance for the Eastern Region which includes all Gippsland Councils. His long term experience, knowledge and skills working in Education, Local Government, Justice Department, sporting and Service Clubs and working with people to manage Aged and Disability services and facilities will equip him to serve SEATS as the new Executive Officer well into the future.

John reported that the transition has commenced with very helpful discussions with Chris Vardon in preparation to taking up the position and he acknowledged the wonderful legacy of Chris's work with SEATS, in local government and in the community.

As from 2 March 2015, the details for SEATS will be as follows:

**Mr John Duscher, Executive Officer**

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### Retirement of Chris Vardon OAM

Chris Vardon retired after nearly twelve years as Executive Officer of SEATS and an emotional farewell was organized for the February 2015 meeting.

Warren Sharpe gave a moving testimony to Chris and his work with SEATS, local

government and his well respected relationship with the community. He outlined Chris's ability to lead and foster these valuable links and plan strategically, building the reputation of SEATS to a new level where it is sought out for advice and leadership.

The Deputy Chairman of SEATS, Cr Sue Whelan OAM, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Chris Vardon in recognition of his dedicated service.

The Treasurer, Gordon Charles reiterated the sentiments of Warren and the Deputy Chairman and presented Chris and wife Judy with a gift of appreciation.

Chris Vardon responded to the delegates, thanking all the speakers for their kind words and jokingly reporting that he has decided not to retire! Chris expressed his gratitude and love for his great supporter, his wife, Judy. Chris thanked everyone for the courtesy extended to him and his wife. The next two weeks sees him end a 54 year working career. Chris expressed delight that John Duscher has taken on the role and is confident that SEATS will progress further under his guidance.

## **New South Wales Election**

The NSW State election will be held on Saturday 28 March 2015. The writs will be issued on 6 March and all candidates and political parties will be requested to support SEATS and its priority projects.

## **Presentations**

*Danny O'Brien MLC attended the Dinner on Thursday evening and briefly addressed the delegates. There was also a presentation from **Mr Richard Elkington, Chair Regional Development Australia (Gippsland) who spoke on the "Gippsland Food Plan"***

***Agricultural Industry Transformation – Gippsland – Associate Professor Robert Faggian, Deakin University.*** A copy of this PowerPoint presentation will be posted on the website and will be highlighted in the SEATS newsletter. This was a very interesting presentation looking at climate change modelling and its effect on agriculture, detailing the strategic planning already done and looking closely at projected transport patterns and costs. Gippsland is well positioned because of this work and Regionally this provides opportunities that SEATS could well explore further.

***Transport Issues in Gippsland and south east region*** – Brad Close, Victorian Transport Association. Brad an old friend of SEATS addressed the group focusing on five main areas including:-

### **1. National Reform**

While National Heavy Vehicle legislation has been introduced, notionally improving administration, various State legislation is still in place. This has in effect increased red tape and continues to affect productivity. The Industry is seeking from regulators and statutory bodies a consistent approach despite borders or jurisdiction, example inconsistencies when crossing borders a PBS approved Truck & dog in Victoria loads to 57.5tn on approved network, crosses into NSW and is automatically back to 50.5tn or enters SA and is back to 54.5tn same truck with approval for PBS yet up to 7 tonne in difference in capacity. How does an industry deal with such variances and remain sustainable?

### **2. Doubling of the Freight Task**

The freight task will double over the next 20 to 30 years. Containers through the Port of Melbourne will almost triple. The Port will likely reach maximum capacity by 2028 and new arrangements will need to be found. Empty containers being returned to Asia are now the biggest export. Containers are only 4% of the metro freight task; in 30 years will only be 10%.

Changes to configurations will see the freight task move from current status of +66% of freight moved in metro area on tray trucks (less than 22.5tn GVM) to semi-trailer/multi trailer combinations to around 42% from the current 30%. This trend is similar in regional areas. The doubling of the freight task cannot be simply doubling the amount of trucks on the road network – more is required by all in the supply chain to address this challenge

Rail and coastal shipping are possible alternatives and should be explored to ease congestion on an already stressed road network.

### **3. Infrastructure**

Governments do not have enough money to fund required infrastructure. Private road operators are becoming more prevalent and in times of shortages of funding opportunities governments are turning to Private operators to build the infrastructure to service the needs. This in turn leads to communities and taxpayers and road users being left with the choice of further congestion or toll roads with most agreements in place for road operators in excess of 30 years. Governments need to seek out different funding options or be forced to do the same thing and get the same result.

Move to Larger Vehicles

Higher Productivity vehicles will be desired as part of the solution in order to meet productivity requirements and increasing congestion. But it will need agencies and government to look closely at asset preservation techniques especially life expectancy of assets such as bridges and roads and consider the options again more of the same or less trucks carrying more?

Industry will accept technology to allow access be it Intelligent Access Programs (IAP) or smarter trucks with the ability to sense changes in conditions and environment already major manufacturers are producing safer trucks that “see” traffic example Mercedes Benz & Volvo

### **4. Fueling the growth**

The increasing freight task in metro areas will pull many drivers from rural areas. How will regional areas attract and keep drivers? What initiatives can be implemented to ensure the transport & logistics industry becomes an employer of choice for school leaver and career changers? Driver profiles to be improved +\$750K equipment cost to furnish new B double add cost of freight this is not a cost that should be left to lower socio/economic class and thus should be promoted as a career not just a job.

### **5. Challenges for Industry into the future regardless of geographic position (metro or regional/country)**

. People . Profile . Profitability . Community

**John Ernst from South Gippsland Shire Council presented on *Gippsland’s Safe Freight Network*.** A copy of the Presentation will be available on the SEATS website and will be highlighted in the SEATS newsletter. Again a very informative presentation providing an overview of where the network came from, the partnerships and how they developed, issues the industry faces and the importance of whole route planning locally, regionally and inter-regionally.

**VicRoads Report and RMS Report. These reports are attached**

**The VicRoads and RMS Reports which had been circulated were received.**

**These will also form part of the SEATS meeting report to members and be on the Website soon.** These reports reflect the Government's direction, investment in network improvements, maintenance and planning and progress of significant projects across the Region. **Harvey Dinelli spoke briefly on his report from the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources.**

### **MR 92 Report**

The motion approved at the November 2014 meeting was rescinded and the Notice of Motion was withdrawn. The following motion was subsequently put to the meeting and approved after a lengthy discussion.

- a) SEATS accept and endorse the "Beyond Nerriga Route Options Study – Corridor Options Report" as submitted to SEATS as a technical document-
- b) SEATS continue to work with member Councils and Government Agencies to advance the freight corridor "beyond Nerriga" with emphasis on Stage 1 – Nerriga to Tarago (via Sandy Point)
- c) SEATS encourages member Councils to use the report and further analysis to form partnerships and project proposals to be submitted to SEATS for consideration as "priority projects" and to pursue grants under the various funding programs that may be applicable to improve the transport network,
  - (i) SEATS specifically invites Palerang Shire Council to submit a SEATS Priority Project application for upgrading of the MR92 link (Nerriga-Braidwood) and pursue grant funding opportunities.
- d) Seats allocate the unspent funds to be used by the Councils for further analysis tasks.
- e) SEATS thank the participants in the study - Goulburn-Mulwaree, Palerang, Shoalhaven, Upper Lachlan and Yass Valley Councils and Transport for NSW as well as the consultant, GHD.

Moved : Greg Pullen  
Carried

Seconded: Cr James Wheelwright

Palerang Council has submitted the project from Nerriga to Braidwood for recognition as a SEATS Priority Project. This is a recommendation of the GHD M R 92 Beyond Nerriga Report

### **MEMBERS REPORTS**

#### **Ralf Kastan, Kastan Consulting**

Outlined his intention to set up a meeting with A/Prof Robert Faggian to look further at expanding the information presented today to other councils in NSW.

#### **Phil Cantillon, Baw Baw Shire**

- Warragul project with VicRoads is progressing well and will provide a significant public transport connection and hopefully improved rail service from Melbourne.
- Awaiting announcement of Heavy Vehicle Program and Heavy Bridge Program for two projects identified through SEATS which will hopefully be on the list.
- Road Maintenance contract of 8 years duration finishes on 30 June. Tenders for new model has been developed.
- Working with other parties, MAV members, to create regional road groups in an effort to harmonize asset information, systems, etc.

#### **Chris Hastie, Wellington Shire Council**

- Upgrades between Sale and Traralgon progressing well. Further works to be done after this has been finished.
- Engaging with VicRoads re upgrades.

#### **Pas Monacella, VicRoads**

- Pas thanked Chris Vardon for his outstanding contribution to SEATS which has resulted in some fantastic outcomes across the Gippsland region.

#### **Paul Stampton, South Gippsland Shire Council**

- Street reconstruction of Gray Street, Leongatha (special charge scheme).
- Road rehabilitation of Henrys Road, Nyora
- Black Spur, Koonwarra – South Gippsland Highway, \$211,000 planning study, late 2015. Cost of \$40-60m with a business case to be presented.
- Leongatha Heavy Vehicle Alternative Route – final detailed design with a change to right of way.

#### **Phil Newham, Upper Lachlan Shire Council**

- Working on sealing last km's of MR 54, which is progressing well with stage one almost complete. Stage 2 planned for next financial year.
- Developer funded works on MR 56 almost completed.
- Successful with a \$1.5 m allocation from State and Federal Governments for a boundary bridge with a neighbouring Shire.

#### **Cr Paul Cockram, Palerang Shire Council**

- Captains Bridge works with thanks to RMS for this piece of infrastructure.

#### **Cr Sue Whelan, Queanbeyan Council**

- RMS Extension Program

#### **Mark Burnett East Gippsland**

- Next round of black spot funding applications for three locations; Scriveners Road in Lakes Entrance, some road in Omeo and another in Lakes.
- Heavy vehicle parking area in Cann River
- Bridges – 243 bridges in various states of disrepair – inventory on Fitzgerald Bridge – level 2 inspection. Bridge may need to be closed. This affects five properties.

#### **Cr Marianne Peltz, East Gippsland Shire**

- Country aerodrome and native vegetation issues. Need for support for public facilities such as aerodromes and telecom towers, particularly in remote areas in cases of emergency situations.

#### **Mike Hyde, Wollongong City Council**

- Fowles Road extension from Dapto into major multi-lot development in Wollongong area. Expensive project exacerbated by flooding issues and indigenous concerns. Latest estimate from GHD for the project including bridge and ancillary works is \$93.5m, however this will flood-proof Dapto.

#### **Kenn Beer, Safe System Solutions**

Safe System Solutions Pty Ltd has partnered with VicRoads to develop a training program aimed at road designers, engineers and operators that highlights the needs of heavy vehicles. The training will be rolled out in Victoria from April and advertising will be sent to local councils and VicRoads offices.

#### **Peter Francis, Bass Coast Shire Council**

- Talks re a bypass around Wonthaggi continue.
- San Remo road slips have been resolved.
- Integrated transport study as per VicRoads report.
- Koo Wee Rup bypass also significant.

- Abattoir upgrading truck movements.

#### **Warren Sharpe, Eurobodalla Shire Council**

- Currently starting work on the Link Road.
- Still working with RMS for intersection solutions with the Princes Highway.
- \$850,000 to relocate a water supply.
- Running a *Fit for Purpose* session in March.
- Warren also added his sentiments again re the retirement of Chris Vardon, and shared his press release regarding Chris' career and community service.

#### **Graeme Brisbane. GHD**

- Echoed the sentiments of Warren Sharpe re Chris Vardon's contribution to SEATS.

#### **Greg Pullen, Shoalhaven City Council**

- Capital expenditure this year is \$107 m with \$55 m being road related, creating in excess of 500 jobs. Appreciative of State and Federal government funding for the support.
- NSW Productivity grants with \$7.2 million for road corridor through South Nowra commencing April/May.

#### **Wayne Sartori, Bega Valley Shire Council**

- Focused on east-west links; Snowy mountains Highway leading to Canberra (tourism and freight route) will result in closure for a week or so.
- Council supporting developments of airport and port transport routes.

#### **MINUTES SECRETARY**

SEATS still requires a Minutes Secretary and would welcome a nomination to fill this role. Please consider. No assistance was forthcoming at this meeting and it was determined that this task would be the responsibility of the host Council and be included in the list of requirements for hosting SEATS meetings. It was also agreed that this matter be further discussed at the AGM. GHD who are hosting the next meeting in Canberra have offered to provide this service for the next meeting.

#### **AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION – GIPPSLAND**

The Deputy Chair noted that several delegates had been very impressed with A/ Professor Robert Faggian's, presentation on *Agricultural Industry Transformation – Gippsland*.

#### **MOTION:-**

Investigate with Associate Professor Robert Faggian, options for further studies re Agricultural Industry Transformation.

Moved: Cr Sue Whelan  
 Seconded: Cr Bob Wenger  
 Carried

As a result of this motion, it has been decided to approach Assoc Prof Faggian to ascertain what can be done to assist in involving the entire SEATS region so that a

full picture can be painted to enable appropriate infrastructure planning which will benefit the Region.

## **Other Business**

### **Some suggestions for future meetings**

It has been suggested that there are several things that could be done to improve SEATS meetings and to improve the accuracy of the Minutes of the meetings.

The following points are worth considering:

- (a) Name plates be provided for the meeting provided by the host organisation and given out at a "registration table" along with any promotional material for the area in which the meeting is being held. The name plates could be put in front of the delegate at the position they take at the table
- (b) delegates write their reports which could be read out and then handed to the Minute Secretary to enable more accurate minutes
- (c) Someone who is a regular attendee sit next to the Minute Secretary (provided by host council or organization) to assist with Minute taking.

### **Terms of Chairperson**

Following a query from Cr Debbie Brown, Chris Vardon explained that to change the term of Chair and Deputy Chair a change to the Constitution is required. This requires a 28 day notice to all members before the AGM.

It was moved by Greg Pullen and seconded by Cr Sue Whelan that a draft notice of motion be tabled at the Executive Meeting in May for consideration. Carried.

### **Hosting a meeting**

Hosting a meeting involves arranging for between 25 and 35 delegates to hold a meeting with power point presentation facilities, light lunch and afternoon tea on the Thursday, host a Dinner on Thursday evening for between 30 and 40 guests and a Guest Speaker, arranging two or three guest speakers on transport infrastructure matters of interest (not more than half an hour per presentation) on the Friday morning with arrangements for morning tea and then a light lunch at about 12 noon. It is also usual (although it doesn't have to happen) for the host Council to organise a guided Bus Tour of the area with particular reference to a transport infrastructure issue in the area or something considered of interest to delegates. It may be necessary to recommend to the host Council to minimize tours to enable more discussion time. Alternatively, it is also acceptable to extend the meeting time on Thursday from, say 10.30am onwards.

Any Council willing to host a meeting in 2016 and 2017 is asked to contact the Executive Officer as soon as possible. There have been some tentative offers to host meetings in 2016 which the E.O. will be eager to follow up. It is also very helpful for the host Council to provide close to venue accommodation contact details.

### **More Good News!**

A few days after our meeting we received the great news from the Mayor of Tumut Shire, Trina Thomson and Bob Stewart that they had received a commitment of \$70m over five years for Gocup Road, on top of the \$10m currently being spent on the Gundagai side. This has been a culmination of many years of lobbying which SEATS has been well involved in as a priority project. Our congratulations have been sent to the Mayor, Councillors and staff. It is a significant project of great economic importance and safety to not only Tumut but to the Region.

## **Meeting Dates and Venues for 2015**

**FEBRUARY: 19 – 20 May 2015** hosted by South Gippsland Shire Council

**MAY: 21 – 22 May 2015** hosted by GHD in Canberra ACT

**AUGUST: 20 – 21 August 2015** hosted by Baw Baw Shire Council at Warragul, Victoria

**NOVEMBER: 5 -6 November 2015** at Goulburn hosted by Goulburn Mulwaree Council.

### **Meeting Dates and Venues for 2016**

**FEBRUARY:** 18 and 19 February 2016 (a Victorian Council to host)

**MAY:** 18 and 19 May 2016 at Shellharbour City Council at Shellharbour  
NSW

**AUGUST:** 18 and 19 August 2016 (a Victorian Council to host))

**NOVEMBER:** 3 and 4 November 2016 (a NSW Council to host)