

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.

Executive Summary – August 2017

The quarterly meeting of SEATS was held on 17th and 18th August 2017 at Sale, Victoria at the impressive Gippsland Regional Sports Complex.

The meeting was hosted by the Wellington Shire Council and delegates and members were warmly welcomed by Cr Carolyn Crossley, Wellington Shire Mayor. Cr Patricia White, SEATS Chair, thanked the Mayor and Wellington Shire for hosting the meeting.

SEATS was delighted with the attendance of the **Mr Danny O'Brien MLA, Member for Gippsland South**, who attended the tour of the Gippsland Water Soil and Organic Recycling Facility and spoke at the Dinner.

Reports

Delegates heard reports from VicRoads, RMS Southern NSW and Transport for Victoria outlining the planning and the progress of priority transport projects across the region. This included proposals in development in NSW with the Berry to Bomaderry Upgrade, Princes Highway Albion Park Rail Bypass, Nowra Bridge, the new bridges at Batemans Bay and Nelligen, Ellerton Drive Extension at Queanbeyan, Batemans Bay Link Road, Lansdowne Bridge and further upgrades to improve safety and provide overtaking lanes on the Monaro Highway. Projects under construction include Dignams Creek, Burrill Lake Bridge, Foxground and Berry Bypass and safety works on the Kings Highway. Projects completed included Bemboka Bridge, and works on the Princes Highway at Termeil Creek and intersection works at Little Forest Road. In Victoria, the Princes Highway East works between Traralgon and Sale continue in staged sections, the South Gippsland Highway will be upgraded through the realignment of the Blackspur and safety works between Meeniyan and Yarram, overtaking lanes between Orbost and the NSW Border, the Continuous Safety Barrier Program under the Safe System Road Infrastructure Program is well underway across the Gippsland Region, under the Heavy Vehicle Productivity Program a number of truck stops, rest areas, traffic signals, and roundabout improvements are being rolled out, a number of bridges are being upgraded and money has been received for important future planning for potential upgrades and bypasses that will improve traffic flow and safety. There has been significant funding announcements in State and Federal Budgets in support of project planning and implementation of priority projects, including the upgrade of the Gippsland Rail Line and Avon Bridge and the development of the Gippsland Logistics Precinct. These reports will be available on the SEATS website shortly.

Presentations

Mr John Websdale, Wellington Shire General Manager for Development, spoke about what was driving the economy in the Shire, how the Shire and community was managing this significant change, what strategies were being applied and in this

exciting time how the Wellington and Victorian economy will benefit. **Mr Scott Lawrence**, VicRoads Regional Director provided an engaging presentation on “Making Our Roads Safer”, outlining the Victorian Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan of “Towards Zero”. There has been a huge investment to address the issue of run-off-road and head-on casualties. There have been a number of High Risk Rural Roads identified and Scott talked about the treatment options, including roadside barrier or centreline wire rope barriers, recommended on these roads including the Princes Highway. **Mr Dave Jones**, RACV Manager Roads and Traffic Advocacy provided a very interesting presentation on “Better Roads For Victoria”. The RACV is plays a lead role in advocating for vital improvements to the road network across the state and has called upon the Government to double the road maintenance budget to fix distressed country roads. He spoke about the Australian Road Assessment Program using an international methodology to address infrastructure, using a star rating to measure the built in safety features that prevent crashes and reduce the severity of these crashes. The RACV wants the State Government to adopt the star rating system for its complete highway network, rural and urban with a commitment to achieving a 3 star minimum. Across the State the RACV has estimated that there is 1500km of distressed roads which would cost \$1.2 billion to strengthen and resurface (\$304m per year). The Tour of the Gippsland Water Soil and Organics Recycling Facility outlined the extensive process of recycling various waste products to produce compost. With the increase of material from across Gippsland and south east Melbourne coming on and off the site (currently more than 40 trucks daily) the roads network becomes a critical part of this important business. These presentations will be available on the website shortly.

SEATS Website- The upgrade of the website continues with a lot of work done already to improve its appearance and effectiveness. This will allow reports, presentations and information of interest to delegates and members to be loaded onto the website quickly and easily accessed. There is a link to all member Councils and other SEATS members on the website already and further work will be done in the future.

SEATS Strategic Statement

Cr Anthony Mayne facilitated further discussion and delegates contributed their thoughts on the mission statement and why they are SEATS members. A working party made up of Cr Mayne, Cr Pelz and Mr Greg Pullen will continue with the fine tuning of the SEATS Vision and Mission Statements and bring the document back for adoption at the November meeting.

NHVR Forum- unfortunately the Regional Forum did not go ahead in conjunction with this SEATS meeting however SEATS and NHVR are still keen to hold this event in the future and will use the successful Shoalhaven Forum model as a benchmark for the planning of the event. The location and timing of this event will essential if it is to be successful in attracting industry and operators.

SEATS Petition

SEATS has prepared a petition to go to the Federal Government drawing attention to the poor condition of some sections of the Princes Highway east of Sale to Wollongong and the need for urgent and on-going funding. It will seek to have the highway recognised as a major freight and tourist route and requests official

recognition under the “National Land Transport Network Act of 2014” to help secure much needed funding. The Petition will be launched in the next few weeks and will continue over the Christmas period to capture tourist support. All Mayors and Councillors will be asked to endorse the Petition and Councils will be asked to distribute the petition through their Information and Community Centres.

SEATS Submissions and Letters of Support for Project Funding

A submission was made to the Department of Infrastructure & Regional Development on the National Freight & Supply Chain Inquiry and letters of support have been provided to Councils applying for funding of priority projects and projects under the “Fixing Country Roads’ Program. This is an important part of the work SEATS does in advocating for vital improvements to the Transport network across the Region.

Rail Freight Alliance Conference- “ Rail Futures”

SEATS has been invited to attend this Conference in Melbourne on the 15th September. The Executive Officer will attend.

Vale: Mr Mick Morland

The meeting noted the sad passing of Mr Mick Morland who made a significant contribution to SEATS as a former Chair and to the Casey Shire and wider community. Condolences have been sent to his family.

Gippsland Regional Roads Group

These projects have been ratified by the GLGN Mayors and endorsed by the six Gippsland Councils. SEATS will look at the opportunity of supporting them at the Regional level by also endorsing the projects and their funding applications (\$160m). The Group will have the opportunity of presenting their extensive list of road and bridges projects at the November meeting.

Announcements

The NSW Budget had some significant gains for projects in the Region in funding for planning and implementation of several SEATS priority projects which is very pleasing. A detailed list of projects was included in the Business papers.

Hosting of Future Meetings

Thank you Wellington Shire for hosting this past meeting.

The next SEATS meeting will be held in Canberra, hosted by Canberra Airport on the 9th & 10th November. Hon Fiona Nash MP, Minister for Regional Development will be the keynote speaker at the Dinner. This promises to be a great meeting with a number of very interesting presentations and engaging sessions. The Notice of the Meeting will be sent out shortly and you will be required to complete a security clearance to participate in the walking tour of the Airport. The other meeting dates are as follows- please put these in your diaries.

February 14th & 15th 2018 Victorian Council/Member to host

May 17th & 18th 2018 NSW Council/Member to host

August 16th & 17th 2018 Victorian Council/Member to host

November 8th & 9th 2018 to be hosted by RMS Southern at Wollongong, NSW.

Delegates/members are asked to please consider the hosting of the future meetings that have yet to be allocated to the end of 2018 and discuss this with your Council or organisation. It is important to plan well ahead and to share the responsibility of hosting a meeting. Please contact the Executive Officer as soon as possible if you are able to host one of these meetings.

NSW Roads Congress

Mayors, Councillors and senior staff were encouraged to attend the NSW Local Roads Conference earlier this year at Parliament House in Sydney. SEATS has endorsed the Conference Communique and will seek the delivery of these outcomes from the NSW and Federal Government. Amongst many important things SEATS supports the call to increase the Local Government funding for the management and upgrade of transport infrastructure and especially the declining condition of bridges, work with Councils to develop improved integrated regional transport plans, build on the Fixing Country Rail Program to target the reduction of freight loads on local roads and regional roads, increase funding in the Roads to Recovery program and review the distribution of Federal assistance Grants having regard to social equity for regional communities. A copy of the Communique has been distributed to all SEATS members.

SEATS AGM

The AGM was held under the Victorian Incorporation Rules but in future the AGM will be held in February to avoid any clashes with Local, State or Federal elections. The election of the Executive Committee was held over until the February meeting and the existing Executive members all agreed to continue until that time.

Delegates Reports

These continue to be an important part of the meetings as they highlight the progress of priority projects, significant developments and issues and challenges faced across the region and identify where SEATS may be able to assist. The provision of these reports has been appreciated even if the delegates have not been able to attend the meeting. These detailed reports will appear in the full minutes of the last meeting at Sale.

Financial Report

The detailed Financial Report for 2016/2017 provided by the SEATS Treasurer was received and Proposed Budget for 2017/2018 adopted. The fees for the 2017/2018 will remain the same as the previous year.

John Duscher

SEATS Executive Officer

