



SEATS provides highly coordinated and influential advocacy for the development of transport infrastructure in the South East Australian region that supports sustainable economic development and the prosperity of its constituents

Pambula River Flood Plain Bridge

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- *To prevent the breakdown of the Princes Highway corridor due to frequent flooding at Pambula.*
- *To overcome the disruption of industrial and commercial activities which rely on inbound and outbound freight for production and to supply interstate and international markets.*
- *To replace the bridge with a high level crossing across the flood plain.*



FACTS

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Pambula River Bridge after flood

The bridge/road at the Pambula River floods on a 1-2 year frequency and is impassable

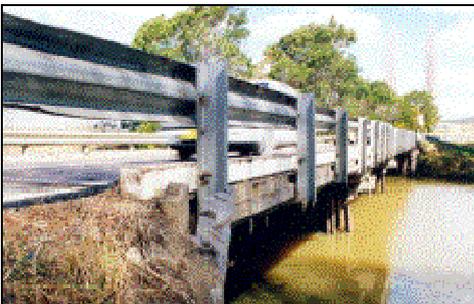
- **The current low level timber bridge is scheduled for replacement at its existing level.**
- **The timber structure is a serious constraint to heavy vehicles. The road cannot be opened to heavy vehicles for several days after heavy rain because the bridge needs to be inspected and often repaired after each flood.**

- The Government has undertaken to provide 50% of \$9m project cost, subject to matching Federal funding.
- All spheres of government have invested significantly in the economic development of the area. Public investment in enhancing dairy processing and the extension of the Eden wharf facility to accommodate commercial activity are undermined if Highway infrastructure remains unreliable.
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Truck crossing Pambula River Bridge

As a result of investment by Bega Cheese and arrangements with Bonlac, there has been a 400% increase in raw milk from Gippsland to Bega. It is hoped that this will continue to increase over the next five years. The efficiency of “just in time” processing depends on a reliable Highway.

- According to VicRoads, the largest single road movement of agricultural and rural products between Victoria to NSW is from East Gippsland. Pambula Bridge is an important but weak link in the network serving East Gippsland.
- The current usage is 5,500 vehicles per day.
- Supplies of fuel and other essential commodities stop.
- Flooding of the Pambula Bridge causes severe social and community disruption, because many community facilities (hospital, schools, shops) are on one side of the bridge, while many houses are on the other.
- Heavy or threatened rain seriously disrupts the substantial tourist industry. Access to Merimbula, a major holiday destination for many Victorians, is across the Pambula flood plain.



Pambula River Bridge after flood



Truck crossing Pambula River Bridge

PROJECT DETAILS

- ◆ A single carriageway two-lane road crosses the 2.3km long flood plain with a timber bridge spanning the Pambula River. Replacement of the timber bridge under the *Timber Bridge Replacement Program* does not address the flood problem.
- ◆ To reduce flooding disruption average frequency from 2 years to 20 years, the road and bridge needs to be raised by 2.5m to 3m.
- ◆ The project will provide a higher level 2 lane highway across the flood plain which will only be subject to closure every 20 years.
- ◆ The estimated cost is \$9m and will take less than 1 year to complete.



Pambula River in Flood in the year 2000

(Photo courtesy of *Merimbula News Weekly*)

SEATS RECOMMENDATIONS

- ➔ Upgrade the Princes Highway across the Pambula River flood plain in 2003 to achieve a 1 in 20 years flood frequency (\$9m)

Companies or industry representatives interested in joining the SEATS Industry Chapter Email <seats@acr.net.au>.