



Risk guides local road design

Road trauma causes 25 deaths and 700 serious injuries a week in Australia and rising, and every serious injury affects the whole community. It costs our community \$700m a day, the same as Australia's Defence budget.

These sobering facts were presented to SEATS' May meeting by David McTiernan, Team Leader Road Safety and Traffic Management with the Australian Road Research Board (ARRB).

He said that as road authorities, local councils have responsibility for road safety on their road networks which make up 82% of public road networks in Australia.

'Councils need to work with State agencies and take a more pro-active approach towards road safety, which includes Safe System design, anticipating risk and taking appropriate action to prevent death and serious injury,' Mr McTiernan said. This contrasts with the current

often reactive approach of modifying road design as a result of crashes.

Evidence based research combined with technology means that roads can be assessed using online tools which are now used in almost every developed country. These assess safety risks on the road network and help determine priorities for investments in road safety. Of State managed road networks, in NSW about 21,000 km has been assessed, all of Victoria's and almost all of Queensland's.

He said every council has free access to all resources on the Austroads website including technical data, guidelines and research reports. Contact AustRoads via their website to get the Council login <https://www.Austroads.com.au>. ARRB also has good information on its website <http://arrb.com.au>.

David's presentation is on SEATS' website.

Clyde River bridge plans

Plans are progressing for a new bridge on the Princes Highway at Batemans Bay. This will increase freight capacity, reduce congestion at peak holiday times, and reduce ongoing maintenance costs associated with the existing bridge.

The NSW Government awarded the contract for the concept design and environmental assessment of a new Bay bridge in April.

Since SEATS' May meeting, it also committed \$300m for construction of new bridges at both Batemans Bay and Nelligen on the Kings Highway. Both are over the Clyde River.

NSW Roads & Maritime



Batemans Bay is one of several bridges on the Princes Highway with 'issues'.

Services Regional Director Renae Elrington told SEATS delegates that congestion at holiday times, when the central span was lifted to allow boats through, was only part of the problem.

The 61 year-old bridge at Batemans Bay is not suitable for Higher Mass Limit (HML) vehi-

cles, is too narrow and has significant maintenance issues, including corroded critical elements, poor substructure condition, and deterioration of the counterweight. Bay bridge options will be exhibited late 2017.

Construction of the two new bridges will start 2019.

Feds fund Gippsland rail needs

The Australian Government announced in late June it would provide \$435m for improvements to the Gippsland rail line to the Victorian Government as well as \$95m to replace the Avon River Bridge at Stratford.

This is part of a major Federal funding boost to Victoria's Regional Rail package, following an apparent 'stand-off' between the two Governments over this funding, since rectified.

The need for more public investment in rail infrastructure in the Gippsland region after years of neglect was highlighted in the Gippsland Rail Needs Study (see SEATS March newsletter).

This Study, by rail industry consultant John Hensch for the Gippsland Local Government Network (GLGN), was a collaboration between GLGN's six member councils. The study was endorsed by SEATS at its May meeting.

The Victorian Government recognises the need for these works, its second biggest package of works after the Ballarat line.

Braidwood 80kph working well

NSW's Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) reduced the speed limit on a section of the Kings Highway east of Braidwood, from 100 to 80kph. The reason was its serious crash history.

Eurobodalla' Shire Council's Warren Sharpe told SEATS delegates this speed reduction was 'an impediment to transport efficiency' costing \$400,000 per year.

However RMS' Regional Director Renae Elrington said there had been no crashes since the speed limit was reduced, and consequently no deaths or injuries. This meant it was a very cost effective and successful safety outcome.

This issue stimulated interesting discussion.

RMS on substandard steel watch

RMS' Regional Director Renae Elrington told SEATS delegates the NSW Government had announced reforms to its steel procurement process. This will address concerns about the quality of structural steel used in construction.

From 1 October, all new NSW Government infrastructure tenders will mandate that all steel must meet the new Australian Steel Standard (AS/NZS 5131).

This will ensure that quality as well as price is considered when the Government procures steel, so enabling fair competition between Australian and international suppliers.

Agreement on Strategic Statement

Delegates at SEATS August meeting will finalise the wording of SEATS' Strategic Statement. The draft statement will be circulated before the meeting.

SEATS Chairman speaks...

Our May meeting at Batemans Bay, hosted by Eurobodalla Shire Council, was most successful. Eurobodalla has long been a member and great supporter of SEATS.

Mayor Liz Innes welcomed us warmly and gave a detailed profile of the Shire. It lacks any rail and a sea port so is wholly dependent on road transport, viz. via the Princes and Kings Highways.

It was a busy but very enjoyable, informative and productive two days thanks to the combined efforts of Council's director Warren Sharpe, Cr Anthony Mayne and staff.

Our 40 delegates and guests enjoyed the presentations, discussions and tour of Council Projects which including South Batemans Bay Link Road and the MacKay Park Precinct. It was good to catch up with several people who had not been to SEATS meetings for a while.

Federal Member for Gilmour Ann Sudmalis joined us for dinner as our guest speaker. She spoke about her passion for improving the safety of people on our roads and her role as Chair of the NSW Black Spot Consultative Panel. Black spot funding is of vital interest to all SEATS members and delegates.

Some details of the presentations are in this newsletter and include:

- the Australian Road Research Board's 'Safe System Approach'
- Eurobodalla's infrastructure projects including redevelopment of Moruya Airport
- importance of transport networks for local industries including the oyster industry

Cr Mayne led a stimulating workshop at the meeting on SEATS Strategic Statement which is a work in progress. This meeting also endorsed The Gippsland Rail Needs Study.

I was also delighted to see that the NSW Budget released after our meeting has supported many SEATS' priority projects that have been on our books for some time.

On a sad note, former SEATS Chair and Mayor of Casey Shire Council Mick Morland has died after being struck by a car while out walking. Mick's enthusiasm and leadership in SEATS' early days provided our organisation with a solid foundation. Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

The next SEATS meeting will be hosted by Wellington Shire Council in Victoria in August. One presentation will be on the Gippsland Regional Roads Group. I hope to see you there.



Cr Patricia White

Cr Patricia White
Chairman

Eurobodalla invests in infrastructure

Eurobodalla Shire Council has many infrastructure projects in various stages of development to drive the Shire's economic future.

Council's Economic Development Manager Sarah Cooper told SEATS delegates the Shire's Gross Regional Product is \$1.42b which, while slightly up on previous years, is only back to where it was in 2009. Most growth was due to tourism. Tourism is such a major contributor to the Shire's economy, Council has combined its tourism and economic development divisions.

Major industries are retail, tourism, construction, agriculture/fishing and health. It has 38,000 residents, 13,487 of whom are employed in 2,832 businesses. Projects outlined were:

1. Road infrastructure

Eurobodalla relies totally on road transport so the condition of its roads, particularly the Princes and Kings Highways, are vital especially access for High Productivity Vehicles (HPV). However HPVs are restricted in key areas, including several major bridges not up to the freight task, particularly Batemans Bay (see p.1) and Narooma bridges.

Ms Cooper also mentioned the increase in international self-drive tourists.

2. Moruya airport upgrade

Council plans a \$9.6m redevelopment of Moruya Airport which it owns and operates. It includes terminal and runway upgrades, increased and improved passenger and aircraft parking, and expanded commercial and tourism spaces. Council has obtained Government commitment of \$7.1m in funds.



Skydive Oz over Moruya Airport.

Ms Cooper outlined the airport's importance to local businesses and community. It is already the base for several very successful businesses, notably Skydive Oz' biggest Skydive training school in Australia, a growing seaplane business, Westpac helicopter rescue, and an aircraft maintenance business.

Terminal improvements have begun. Areas of airport land are currently undergoing archaeological assessments.

3. Marina infrastructure

Batemans Bay Marina redevelopment aims to revitalise the waterfront and boost the local economy. Plans were constrained until the marina and the Clyde's entrance channel were dredged late last year.

The Marina leaseholder completed the \$4.5m stage one redevelopment including more and improved berths, visiting yacht facilities, and drawn six businesses to a new retail precinct. Future plans include eastern expansion, more wet berths, ancillary buildings and more dining.

'This precinct is really coming alive with better access to the water which is a huge boost to tourism,' Ms Cooper said.

4. Canberra Airport

Canberra Airport now has regular flights to Singapore which presents export opportunities for the region's food producers, particularly oyster growers. It also means tourists can fly directly from Singapore to Canberra potentially boosting the Shire's tourism.

Other Eurobodalla infrastructure projects were visited by SEATS delegates (see page 4).

Transport links vital for oysters

The coast's road link with Canberra is vital for the Eurobodalla's oyster industry to achieve its potential, said innovative Clyde River oyster grower Ben Ralston. Temperature sensitive freight was crucial.

Ben and his brother John are fifth generation oyster growers selling 80,000 dozen oysters a year, mostly for Sydney and Melbourne and some for Singapore and China. Most are mar-



Ralstons' Oysters Unplugged businesses in three cities have taken off. Their staff shuck oysters for guests at corporate events/weddings. 'People love it; a freshly shucked oyster is tops'. Ben, right, in action at Narooma's Oyster Festival shucking as guests arrived.

keted under their own label, and some under the Australia's Oyster Coast (40 shareholder growers in eight south coast estuaries) label.

'We receive orders in the morning, harvest and then load them in their shell on the truck that same afternoon,' he said. 'The process of exporting to Asia, whether via Sydney or Canberra, needs streamlining.' Access to Singapore via Canberra Airport has huge potential with less distance, but road transport is not competitive.

'Then once we get into Singapore, we're competing against the rest of the world. Potentially we can get higher prices but to achieve that we need a more robust supply chain.'

He said people are willing to travel to the coast for oysters. Improved road access to their farms would add value to the experience.

Their initiatives include a pop-up oyster bar and café at Batemans Bay Marina, and Oysters Unplugged in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Tour highlights shire's major projects

Eurobodalla's Infrastructure Director Warren Sharpe led SEATS' tour of several Council projects including the second stage of the South Batemans Bay Link Road (now called Glenella Road), Corrigan's Reserve inclusive playground, Hanging Rock regional recreation facility and the Mackay Park precinct.

Link Road project

This three-stage project connects Batemans Bay's southern suburbs and Surf Beach industrial area directly with the Princes Highway, bypassing the CBD. It will open up residential and employment lands, development valued at \$800m, as well as relieve CBD congestion during peak holiday periods.

Council is currently constructing the 2.2km bypass road and intersection that will link George Bass Drive to the Princes Highway. The NSW Government provided \$10m funding.

However the project can not be finalised until NSW Roads & Maritime Services (RMS) funds the realignment of the Princes Highway with an appropriate intersection to actually connect the Link Road with the Highway.

Local Member and NSW Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Andrew Constance is advocating the case with the NSW Minister for Roads on Council's behalf, supported by SEATS.

Council's Project Engineer Ross Garner spoke to delegates about the project. They were impressed with the quality of work being done by council crews on a project of this scale.

Mr Sharpe said the crews were utilising skills built up through Council's nationally accredited training scheme and the systems used to deliver the East Nelligen project on the Kings Highway, on behalf of RMS, completed last year.

McKay Park precinct

Council has made no decision yet on the future redevelopment of a large Princes Highway



Council crews at work constructing the \$10m stage 2 of the South Batemans Bay Link Road (Glenella Road). SEATS' bus was the first public bus to travel on the new by-pass. Photo courtesy ESC.

site near Batemans Bay Bridge. It is a combination of Crown and Council owned land (Council purchased the former Bowling Club). Potential uses include tourism related facilities, an aquatic centre, sporting fields, arts and cultural facilities.

Council is investigating the benefits of a public private partnership to deliver the outcomes the community wants.

Hanging Rock complex

Council is undertaking progressive upgrades to this complex and adjoining precinct to make it a top regional sporting facility capable of hosting regional level games and events.

Inclusive playground

This playground at Batemans Bay is the Shire's largest. Its staged \$1.5m redevelopment provides a regional scale fully inclusive playground in partnership with NFP organisation The Bay Push.

Stage one was funded by Council, NSW and Australian Governments, The Bay Push and the Variety Club of Australia.

What is SEATS?

South East Australian Transport Strategy (SEATS) identifies and advocates for vital projects to improve transport infrastructure and connectivity and stimulate economic development in southeastern Australia. It is a strong independent partnership of councils, industry, government authorities and other organisations Wollongong to Dandenong.

Four lanes goal on Princes

Four lanes on the Princes Highway from Wollongong to the Jervis Bay turnoff is a NSW Government and Roads & Maritime Services priority.

SEATS webpage up

SEATS' improved website looks better, is more effective, and receiving many favourable comments. The 'Wow factor' is coming.

Streamline disaster relief

Bega Valley Shire Council, still struggling to reconcile State and Federal disaster funding after two years, says a more efficient and quicker way to assess, fund and reinstate essential infrastructure is needed. SEATS will follow up.

SEATS meetings

17-18 August: Hosted by Wellington Shire Council at Sale, Victoria.

9-10 November: Hosted by Canberra Airport at Canberra Airport.

2018

14-15 February: Hosted Victoria. TBA

17-18 May: Hosted NSW. TBA

16-17 August: Hosted Victoria. TBA

8-9 November: Hosted by RMS

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