

Support for the Request

Australia's regions contribute substantially to the nation's growth and prosperity. The South-East Australian Region embraces south east NSW, eastern Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory and is bounded by the Hume Highway corridor between Sydney and Melbourne and the coastal strip between Wollongong and Westernport Bay.

It is a large region of nearly two million people, one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. It is rich in primary resources, has a skilled workforce, wonderful natural assets and an enormous potential which improvements to transport infrastructure would undoubtedly unlock. Inadequate transport infrastructure has long been identified as a major impediment to the growth and prosperity of this important region.

On behalf of the communities across this region served by the members and delegates of SEATS we believe it is time to actively pursue this recognition of the Princes Highway, East of Sale Victoria to Wollongong NSW, as a Road of national importance and be recognised under The National Land Transport Network Act 2014. First and foremost the SEATS cross-border membership provides a collective, united voice to all levels of Government to show that this region of Australia is working as one to improve transport infrastructure. This recognition would help secure the provision of necessary additional funding for the planning and delivery of new infrastructure, maintenance of existing infrastructure and the provision of important safety upgrades.

This region presents some major opportunities and improved funding is vital to its growth and prosperity. Whilst there has been some welcomed investment in the expansion and improvements of the network in some parts of the region much more is needed in the near future. With the substantial residential growth in Melbourne and Sydney and along the Princes Highway corridor the efficient and safe movement of freight and people has become even more important. In support of this action a quarter of the nation's vegetables are grown in the Lindenow Valley, near Bairnsdale in Victoria, much of the nation's milk supply comes from this region and there are many more examples of increased industry activity which means even more movement on this main route as goods are transported to markets. As a recognised alternative tourist route and destination coupled with the number of those enjoying "sea change" there has been a significant increase in the movement on this highway network, some parts of which are in need of immediate attention. The eight Councils within this area are Wollongong, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Kiama, Bega Valley, East Gippsland and Wellington and they are vastly impacted by the regular influx of these tourists.

The responsible members of SEATS continue to strongly advocate for this recognition of the importance of the Princes Highway and the provision of urgent funding for the betterment of our communities, industry and business. The Hume Highway in comparison has received substantial funding over many decades, predicated on this movement of freight and people, industry activity and growth and now we believe it is time to provide the same opportunities to those who use the Princes Highway.

