

# SOUTH EAST AUSTRALIAN TRANSPORT STRATEGY INC.



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National Freight & Supply Chain Inquiry  
Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development  
GPO Box 594  
Canberra City ACT 2601

28<sup>th</sup> July 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

## **SEATS Response to National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy**

SEATS welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the inquiry that will guide the preparation of a National Freight and Supply Strategy. We believe that the Discussion Paper is a good starting point for the development of this important strategy and further builds on the framework and commitment that will meet the long term needs and aspirations of our rapidly growing nation. It is vital that Australia has the most efficient freight system, a real challenge with the freight task expected to grow around 50 percent over the next twenty years. The measures identified as important in this discussion (Terms of Reference) are comprehensive and SEATS will respond to several of these in our submission.

### **About SEATS**

My name is John Duscher, the Executive Officer of the South East Australian Transport Strategy Group, (SEATS).

The SEATS 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 around two million people and one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. It is rich in resources, has a skilled workforce, wonderful natural assets and has huge potential which opportunities for improvements to transport infrastructure would provide.

SEATS as an independent and collective voice has the simple vision for an effective integrated transport network that stimulates economic growth that is sustainable and sensitive to the environment and enhances communities. To achieve this SEATS acts as a strong advocate for its members in a well-established partnership, which includes Councils, State Road and Rail Authorities, Private Companies, Industry leaders, Consultants, Tertiary Education Institutions, Economic Development Agencies and State and Territory and Federal Government.

**Membership of SEATS currently includes:**

East Gippsland Shire Council, Latrobe City Council, Wollongong City Council, Shellharbour City Council, Shoalhaven City Council, Wellington Shire, Wollondilly Shire Council, Baw Baw Shire Council, Bega Valley Shire Council, Eurobodalla Shire Council, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council, South Gippsland Shire Council, Bass Coast Shire Council, Goulburn Mulwaree Shire Council, Snowy Valleys Council, Upper Lachlan Shire Council, Roads and Maritime Services(RMS), VicRoads, Bega Cheese, Gordon Charles Consultant, GHD, Murray Goulburn Co-Operative Co Ltd, NRMA, Forests NSW, Canberra Airport, NSW Ports, Port of Melbourne Corporation, RDA Far South East, RDA Southern Inland, Softwoods Working Group, Southern Group of Councils, RDA Gippsland Committee, Kastan Consulting, VicTrack, Kenn Beer- Safe System Solutions, Bransgrove Transport.

We are a strategy based organisation that strongly advocates for the upgrading of the network of Roads, Rail, Ports, Airports and intermodal facilities to be able to move people, freight and commodities efficiently both within the region and connect with the transport network beyond and link with markets.

SEATS works with its partners to identify where appropriate infrastructure is needed and these have become priority projects, underpinning economic development and social outcomes and aimed at stimulating vital investment from the Government and the private sector. This solid planning and advocacy has helped deliver several vital projects across the region over the past 23 years, has supported and promoted the growth of industry and engaged with many communities to address the issues that are creating barriers to their growth and prosperity. The need for additional Transport infrastructure and improvements to the existing infrastructure has been the basis of the strong advocacy work done by SEATS, offering a holistic approach and support for the Regional transport network. The basis of this strong advocacy is the development of a list of Priority Projects through its **Strategic Transport Network** document. This document has recently been reviewed and upgraded and provided to all elected Government representatives and agencies and SEATS members across the Region. It covers National, State and Local transport needs and is the basis of discussions with the decision makers, providing the strongest support for vital projects in a truly Regional approach.

The SEATS Regional Strategic Transport Network has been developed to achieve the following for the Region:

- **Economic Competiveness** by improving access to jobs, ports and key locations of economic activity
- **Environmental Protection** by providing sustainable transport systems and networks aimed at meeting existing and future needs whilst minimising the impact on the environment.
- **Enhanced Livability** by improving people's access to places of work, education, recreation and public health services.
- **Governance** by ensuring that decisions on regional infrastructure investments on transport are well informed, with improved integration of transport planning, evaluation and assessment.

**Improved safety outcomes for all users** delivered across the Region through improved infrastructure networks. Road safety remains a big issue with the increase of serious accidents and fatalities in the local roads network.

## **Existing Strategic Network**

### **Existing significant freight infrastructure**

## **Rail links**

Main Sydney to Melbourne rail corridor

Bomaderry to Sydney rail corridor

Bairnsdale to Melbourne rail corridor

Moss Vale to Sydney rail corridor

Canberra to Goulburn

## **Road links**

### **(a) Freight Corridors**

Hume Highway (Sydney-Melbourne)

Barton Highway

Federal Highway

Princes Highway including M1 Motorway

Picton Road (Wollongong to Hume Highway)

M1 Motorway/Masters Road/Springhill Road from Gwynneville to Port Kembla Port

Illawarra Highway (Albion Park Rail to Hume Highway)

Kangaroo Valley Road

MR92 (Princes Highway at Nowra to Nerriga)

Kings Highway

Tumut to Hume Highway at South Gundagai (Gocup Road)

Monaro Highway

Snowy Mountains Highway (Bega to Hume Highway)

Imlay Road (Forestry Road) (linking Eden Port to Bombala)

Strzelecki Highway (Leongatha to Princes Highway)

South Gippsland Highway (Dandenong to Sale)

Bass Highway (Lang Lang to Leongatha)

Healesville-Koo Wee Rup Road (Koo Wee Rup to Pakenham)

Western Port Highway (Dandenong Hastings Road)

Clyde – Five Ways Cranbourne Road

**(b) Tourist Routes**

Moss Vale Road (Nowra North to Moss Vale)

Brindabella Road (Tumut to Canberra)

Kosciusko Road and The Alpine Way (Cooma to Thredbo)

Great Alpine Road (Bairnsdale to Wangaratta via Victorian Alps)

Phillip Island Road (Anderson to Cowes)

Wilson's Promontory Road (Meeniyan/Foster to Wilson's Prom)

Grand Ridge Road

**Port links**

Port Kembla

Eden

Hastings

Barry Point (Port Anthony)

**Intermodal Terminal links**

Port Kembla (road, rail, sea)

Moss Vale (road, rail / enterprise zone)

Hume Highway Distribution Centres (Yass, Albury)

Goulburn (road, rail)

Tarago (road, rail - currently waste only)

Eden (road, sea)

Wagga Wagga (road, rail)

Cootamundra (road, rail)

Canberra Airport

Bairnsdale (road, rail)

Morwell (road, rail)

Port Hastings (road, rail, sea)

**Air links – Where Regular Passenger Traffic (RPT) occurs**

Canberra

Merimbula

Moruya

**Air links – Non RPT**

Illawarra Regional Airport

Nowra (HMAS Albatross - RAN)

Cooma (Snowy Mountain Airports)

Goulburn

West Sale

East Sale (RAAF)

Traralgon (Latrobe)

Bairnsdale

SEATS commissioned and released a Cross-Border Study in 2013 which provided an analysis and profile of the economic activity in the Region, identifying the importance of cross border movement and the constraints to further economic development and social connectivity( see attachment)

**Key Issues - SEATS believes that these issues need to be carefully considered when developing the Freight and Supply Chain Strategy**

- **Congestion and cost to business- competitiveness**
- **Objectives for future planning do not adequately address the needs of those rural areas which have limited access to major forms of transport, inadequate infrastructure planning and expenditure and have limited access to public transport.**
- **Condition of infrastructure and lack of investment in infrastructure and planning. The current state of roads in some regional areas may make them unsuitable for some high productivity vehicles.**

- **Need to work with Councils to develop integrated regional transport plans.**
- **Provide transport linkages, both road and rail, to the future inland Rail to ensure the best productivity outcomes for the Region, NSW and Australia.**
- **Development of new and improved technologies is essential. Innovation is a key.**
- **Transport corridors need to be preserved- need to ensure the planning process is in place to set aside freight corridor reservations..**
- **Need to look at the experience of overseas strategies- best practice and success. Look at attracting Private investment and developing private/public partnerships.**
- **Broad first and last mile issues. Need to work closely with local government to see improvements.**
- **Cross-border constraint issues need to be identified and addressed.**

**SEATS recognises the contribution of all levels of Government in providing on-going financial assistance for the management of local roads and infrastructure in Regional areas through;**

- **Black Spot Funding**
- **Heavy Vehicle Safety and Productivity Program**
- **Bridges Renewal Program**
- **Financial Assistance Grants**
- **Roads To recovery Program**

**It is vital that these programs have permanent increased funding to support Regional Freight connections. This point was well supported again at the June 2017 NSW Local Roads Congress, “ addressing issues on local and regional roads and to open up access by higher productivity freight vehicles to improve transport efficiency”.**

**The Congress noted with great concern the “chronic” underfunding of basic road surfacing and renewal works, linking it with worsening road safety outcomes as evidenced by the increasing numbers of serious accident and fatalities on local and regional roads. This issue of safety on the freight and Supply chain network has rightfully been a major focus for some time and needs to be imbedded in the development of this National Strategy.**

Whilst SEATS recognises the validity of considering freight volumes and movements it believes that more consideration should be given to planning for expected increases in population on the south eastern seaboard and the fact that this will increase the need to transport goods into the area. Seasonal increases in population should also be considered. The road network is the lifeline of many coastal areas and employment opportunities should also be factored into the consideration of funding of network priorities.

SEATS supports an increased investment in the rail freight network and economically and socially sustainable intermodals to concentrate freight movements. More work needs to be done with the transport operators to ensure there is adequate support for safe and timely freight transport movement.

SEATS is appreciative of this opportunity to comment on the development of the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy. Whilst we have concentrated largely on the experience of the region we represent there is a very strong argument for a Nationally consistent approach.

Improvement plans should demonstrate better safety, sustainability and improved amenity outcomes along with strong efficiency and productivity gains in an integrated freight system. There should also be a very strong commitment to fund the delivery of the projects that will see these vital improvements.

Yours faithfully,  
John Duscher JP  
SEATS Executive Officer