



# Making roads safer for all



*Four-wire flexible barriers are being installed along many high risk roads over the next four years as part of Victoria's plans to reduce the road toll on regional and rural roads Towards Zero by 2020. Photo courtesy Towards Zero web page.*

Victoria is taking a holistic approach to build a safer road system by treating whole lengths of roads, said VicRoads Regional Director Scott Lawrence. 'Our aim is to keep people within the road corridor and save lives,' he said.

He told SEATS delegates in August this was the aim of the State's 'Towards Zero Road Safety Strategy 2016-2020', a collaborative community effort involving VicRoads, Transport Accident Commission, Victoria Police, other government departments and the community. 'It's our belief that zero deaths and serious injuries on our roads are possible.'

He highlighted some facts:

- Four times as many people die on country roads than on metropolitan roads
- Crossing the centre line is the largest cause of road fatalities
- Speeds above 80 km/h are likely to result in serious injury or death in head-on collisions.

Twenty of Victoria's highest risk sections of regional and rural roads have been identified using the Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP), including several sections of the Princes Hwy. They will be improved to address

run-off-road and head-on casualties, investing \$340m over more than 2500 km of roads.

Mr Lawrence said one improvement is installing a range of flexible barrier safety systems along each section to optimise safety performance, in addition to the more traditional guard rail in difficult terrain. These barrier systems will be installed on both the roadside and the centre-line where the road can be widened.

A similar rollout will be installed on 330kms of high risk, high volume 100km/hour roads. He said the use of flexible barriers has been shown to reduce run-off road and head-on crashes by 85%.

Most hits on the barrier, he said, result in cars driving away which is a good outcome when there are no injuries. Victoria is now moving to the new standard of four-wire rope safety barriers from the previous best practice three-wire barrier because four-wires have greater capacity to contain vehicles.

The use of barriers prompted discussion. Does AMCO deflect vehicles better than cable? 'It depended on the design of the barrier, such as post spacing,' he said. 'While there would be

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## Distressed roads need fixing

The Victorian Government needs to double its road maintenance budget to fix 1,500 km of distressed country roads across the state, according to RACV Manager Roads and Traffic Advocacy Dave Jones.

The RACV estimates 1,500 km of 'distressed' roads across Victoria need strengthening and resurfacing, costing \$1.2b (\$304m per year). This would make road infrastructure safer and therefore save lives.

His presentation to SEATS delegates outlined the Australian Road Assessment Program (AusRAP) run by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) and state motoring clubs.

It uses an international methodology to address infrastructure using a star rating to measure safety features built into roads to prevent crashes and reduce the severity of crashes.

The RACV wants the Victorian Government to adopt the star rating system across its highway network with a commitment to achieving a three star minimum.

## Make Princes Hwy a national highway

SEATS will soon launch a petition calling for the Federal Government to include the Princes Highway from Sale to Wollongong in the National Highway Network.

It will be sent to all councils in SEATS region and be available on SEATS webpage and in all Visitor Information Centres.

SEATS hopes to present the first lot of petitions to the Australian Government in conjunction with its November meeting, but wants the petitions to continue over the summer holiday season to get feedback from tourists.

The petition calls for urgent and ongoing funding for the Highway and for it to be recognised as a major freight and tourist route.

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some impact on the lane in the opposite direction, the cable barrier would still reduce speeds in a collision.' He thought cable safer than AMCO but said discussion was ongoing about barrier width and deflection.

Another delegate asked if these barriers restricted animal movement. 'It's not clear,' he said. 'Kangaroos can jump it while smaller animals can go under, and there are also breaks in the barrier at least every 400m for maintenance.'

Flexible barriers have been contentious with motorcyclists. The Towards Zero strategy for popular riding routes is to install barriers with extra safety features for motorcyclists, such as padded posts and under-run protection.

Scott Lawrence's presentation on Towards Zero is on SEATS website.

## SEATS Chairman speaks...



SEATS Chair Cr Patricia White, VicRoads Scott Lawrence, RACV's Dave Jones and SEATS Deputy Chair Cr Marianne Pelz at the August meeting at Sale.

Wellington Shire Council Mayor Cr Carolyn Crossley warmly welcomed us to our August meeting at Sale at their impressive Gippsland Regional Sports Complex.

We were delighted to be joined by Member for Gippsland South Danny O'Brien MLA for the fascinating tour of Gippsland Water Soil and Organic Recycling Facility and then for dinner.

Wellington's General Manager for Development John Websdale gave an impressive presentation about the significant changes taking place in Wellington Shire – a drop in investment with more investment to follow (details next page).

Other presentations featured different aspects of road safety (see page 1). VicRoads Scott Lawrence spoke of the need to take a holistic approach to road safety along whole lengths of roads and of the value of barriers, while RACV's Dave Jones focused on the Australian Road Assessment Program.

We held our AGM at this meeting. From now on, the AGM will be held in February to avoid any clashes with local, state or Federal elections. The election of SEATS Executive committee was held over until February.

SEATS has recently made a submission on the National Freight & Supply Chain Inquiry and also provided letters of support to several councils applying for funding of priority projects and projects under the 'Fixing Country Roads' and 'Fixing Country Bridges' programs.

Finalising SEATS Strategic Statement is proving more complicated than most of us initially thought, but the final outcome will benefit from the rigorous scrutiny we are giving it.

Planning for SEATS' November meeting at Canberra Airport is well advanced and is based around the general theme of 'Demand in the South East NSW Region to Progress Economic Development'. Should be fascinating.

Please note, those who want to go on the walking tour of Canberra Airport at the November meeting need to complete a security clearance in advance.

I hope to see you there.

*Cr Patricia White  
Chairman*



# Construction jobs boost local economy

Construction jobs associated with major projects have provided a significant boost to the economy of Wellington Shire, the host of last month's SEATS meeting. But as Wellington's General Manager for Development John Websdale told delegates, unfortunately those jobs end once the project finishes.

After 2018 he said more construction jobs would leave the area and Council was working with business and tourism associations to prepare them for it.

First though, he produced some interesting statistics to put the Shire's economy in context, noting tourism is not among the Shire's main economic drivers:

- its largest employment sector is agriculture, followed by health care and social assistance
- public administration (largely through the RAAF's training base at East Sale) and health care and social assistance sectors paid most wages
- the manufacturing and construction sectors spent more in the local economy than agriculture
- the greatest economic output was from mining (gas and oil come from Bass Strait into Longford) and manufacturing.

Significant job losses occurred in May when Esso Australia completed construction of the Gas Conditioning Plant at its existing Longford facilities near Sale. Longford supplies most of Victoria's gas requirements as well as supplying New South Wales, Tasma-



*The Pilatus PC-21, the world's most advanced pilot training aircraft, will be used in the AIR 5428 Pilot Training based at East Sale. Photo courtesy Wellington Shire Council.*

nia and other areas.

The Plant processes gas from the Kipper Tuna Turrum development in Bass Strait. Its construction had generated more than 800 direct jobs with 90% of the workforce being from the Gippsland Region.

Further job losses followed when ESSO outsourced its catering to Western Australia.

More construction jobs were created when the Defence Department decided to re-locate its Basic Flying Training School (AIR 5428) for Airforce, Navy and Army pilots from Tamworth to East Sale in late 2019 for the next 25 years.

Construction is now well underway with 230-300 workers on site through 2017. The project includes live-in accommodation for 105 students, classrooms and training facilities, new hangars and maintenance workshops, and flight simulators.

Once completed, due to open late 2019, the School will bring 150 extra Defence jobs to East Sale (on top of the already 700 at the RAAF base), 165 students a year, and boost economic output by \$168m a year.

As part of their support for the AIR 5428 Project, the Victorian Government committed \$5m for infrastructure upgrades to the existing West Sale Airport which will be used for circuit flying training.

More construction jobs will come with further work to upgrade the Princes Highway and with planned improvements to the Gippsland Rail Line.

Mr Websdale said a strong local advocacy campaign resulted in a \$435m Government commitment to upgrade the Gippsland Rail Line which will create another 400 construction jobs.

## Project investment map a hit

SEATS delegates were very impressed with the map shown by Transport for Victoria's Laurie Jeremiah at the Sale meeting entitled 'New Transport Investments 2016/2017'. This illustrated his comprehensive presentation on Government investment in transport infrastructure in 2016/2017.

Delegates liked how it clearly showed where projects were happening and their cost. Some suggested a similar map for the whole SEATS region would be extremely valuable to show where SEATS priority projects are located and what funding was needed.

# SORF treats and adds value to waste



SEATS delegates were impressed with the Soil and Organic Recycling Facility near Sale.

SEATS delegates at the August meeting were impressed with their tour of the Soil and Organic Recycling Facility (SORF) at Dutson Downs, 20km south-east of Sale.

This is an impressive facility, the first of its kind in Victoria. It treats prescribed and non-prescribed organic wastes and hydrocarbon contaminated soils which can then be reused, thereby reducing waste to landfill.

Since SORF opened in 2009, there has been a significant increase in the volume of material from across Gippsland and south east Melbourne moving on to the site and material moving off the site, now more than 40 trucks daily. The road network is therefore a critical part of this important business.

SORF manufactures high-

quality compost for use in pasture improvement, land rehabilitation or beautification. The compost is used on the 1,000 ha farm adjoining the site.

Wastes treated include contaminated soils from disused petrol stations or gas works, animal fats and petrol-based pollutants which are converted (using microbes) into their component parts – carbon, water and beneficial soil organics.

The plant also recycles liquids such as waste oils and washdown water from factories, food processors and machinery plants, and treats contaminated water which can then be reused for agricultural purposes.

It also accepts waste which is not part of the composting process, such as asbestos and synthetic mineral fibres.

## 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.

### Dredge starts in Eden

Dredging for the \$44m Eden Breakwater Wharf Extension project has begun. The dredge will remove 230,000 sq m of material to create a deep berthing pocket for cruise ships to tie up at the wharf.

### Electric charge points

Who should install charge points for electric cars – councils or industry – and where they should be located were raised at the August meeting. SEATS will investigate further.

### Bigger than Darling Hbr

Shellharbour's Shell Cove Marina, which will be bigger than Sydney's Darling Harbour, is two years from having boats. It is one of Australia's largest local government projects.

## SEATS meetings

**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 Southern, Wollongong

## SEATS Executive

**Chairman** Cr Patricia White (Shoalhaven), **Deputy Chair** Cr Marianne Pelz (East Gippsland),

**Secretary** Cr Graeme Middlemiss (Latrobe), **Treasurer:** Mark Burnett (East Gippsland).

**Victorian representatives:** Cr Keith Cook (Baw Baw) Cr Jeremy Rich (South Gippsland), Cr Clare Le Serve (Bass Coast).

**NSW representatives:** Greg Pullen (Shoalhaven), Cr Marianne Saliba (Shellharbour), Cr Sue Whelan OAM

## Possible Koo Wee Rup Airport flies closer

A recent announcement about a possible second international airport for Melbourne between Koo Wee Rup and Lang Lang prompted some excitement at SEATS August meeting.

Baw Baw Councillor Keith Cook spoke about the project's huge potential to create jobs.

Although the idea is not new, Paragon Premier Investments' announcement in July that it now has investors to bankroll its \$7b construction brought it closer to reality. Paragon has

said it would be funded by a Europe and Middle East consortium, provided the Victorian Government deems the airport necessary infrastructure.

The airport would initially be about the size of Canberra Airport.

Its initial focus would be on cargo flights, possibly by 2020, particularly exporting fresh fruit and vegetables to China and other Asian markets. The next stage would be domestic flights followed by international flights.