

SEATS Submission to the Freight Reform Policy released by Transport for NSW in April 2024

Background

SEATS (South East Australia Transport Strategy) provides highly co-ordinated 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.

SEATS, formed in the mid-1990s, is an alliance of Local Government and other Government agencies together with industry that is concerned about the state of the freight transport network across south eastern Australia including ACT. The organisation meets quarterly, has a paid secretariat and prioritises projects across all forms of transport that its membership has identified as worthy of Government and operator support.

Some projects have commenced either in a planning or construction phase. Some projects extend into Victoria's Gippsland region as well as the ACT. It is pointed out that much of the freight concerned is not destined for metropolitan markets but from manufacturing node to manufacturing node or to port facilities for export.

The current SEATS Priority Project Strategic Statement – 2024 is attached at the conclusion of this submission (P16 onwards). It embraces transport network issues across the SEATS region. This Strategic Statement is reviewed annually and represents those projects or issues that the SEATS committee feels will enhance the freight task and increase freight productivity.

Context

The SEATS region consists of several regional production areas. The Illawarra-Shoalhaven is industrialised with steel manufacture, production of chemicals and nutraceuticals, food products including stockfeeds, building products. The southern tablelands has strong agricultural production, quarry supplies and timber processing. Out of Victoria's Gippsland comes horticultural produce requiring key freight and transport connections into Sydney.

The region has significant quantities of inbound and outbound freight, with freight travelling through Port Kembla and Port Eden dominating movement in the region. The movement of freight to and from the region relies on existing road and rail networks. Key freight corridors that enable the movement of freight include the M1 Princes Motorway (Mount Ousley Road), Picton Road, the Princes Highway as well as the South Coast rail line and the Moss Vale to Unanderra rail line. The Monaro Highway is an important corridor between metropolitan Sydney and Illawarra Shoalhaven and the Gippsland areas within Victoria.

Introduction

This submission will address each of the topics raised in the Consultation Paper:

- The current freight task in NSW
 - Exports & imports; Interstate freight; Intrastate freight; Government policy & regulations
- The changing freight task

- A growing & changing population; Climate change; Emerging technology
- Strategic Issues
 - The entire freight chain;
 - Role of government;
 - Challenge of integration
- The discussion questions raised will be specifically addressed.

SEATS acknowledges the existing national land transport network and the NSW rail network. Both of which are poorly represented within the SEATS area. A similar poor representation of both road and rail services exist in Gippsland. This was a prime purpose in the establishment of SEATS to improve network linkages.

The Road Network is shown in the T4NSW document to be:

Figure 2.4 National Land Transport Network and NSW state road network



Source: Transport for NSW

Within the SEATS area the road network is primarily the Princes Highway and the Federal/Monaro Hwy each running north-south and connecting Sydney with Melbourne via Victoria’s Gippsland region. The Hume Highway radiates from Sydney in a south westerly direction towards Yass and beyond to Melbourne and other places.

A network of east-west crossings provide interconnectivity between the Princes Highway corridor on the coastal plain with the Hume/Federal/Monaro Highway corridor. Each of these crossings of the Illawarra Escarpment climbs the 6-800m from the coast over mountain passes built in the 1800s.

To understand the movement of freight, an understanding of some of the major industrial activities needs to be understood. The following list is not exhaustive but represents the scattered nature of these manufacturing nodes and the types of freight being carried.

Locality (industry)	Freight out (road/rail)	Freight In (road/rail)
Wollongong/Pt Kembla	Steel, Cars, Manufactured goods, waste materials	Coal, Grain, Quarry materials
Nowra/Bomaderry	Processed food ingredients, Stockfeeds, Ethanol, Chemicals	Grain, coal, quarry materials
Bega/Eden	Dairy Products, timber, (wood waste by sea)	Milk, Wood waste, Quarry materials
Goulburn/Marulan	Quarry products,	
Tumut	Wood products, wood/paper waste	Timber, Timber/paper waste
Tarago		Putrescible waste from Sydney
Bombala	Processed timber, forest logs	Forest logs
Gippsland	Horticulture, wood waste, milk	Stockfeed, dairy products

The freight is diversified and includes over 6m tonnes/annum of quarry materials moving from the Southern Tablelands to the coast and Sydney by Boral using several of the coastal escarpment passes.

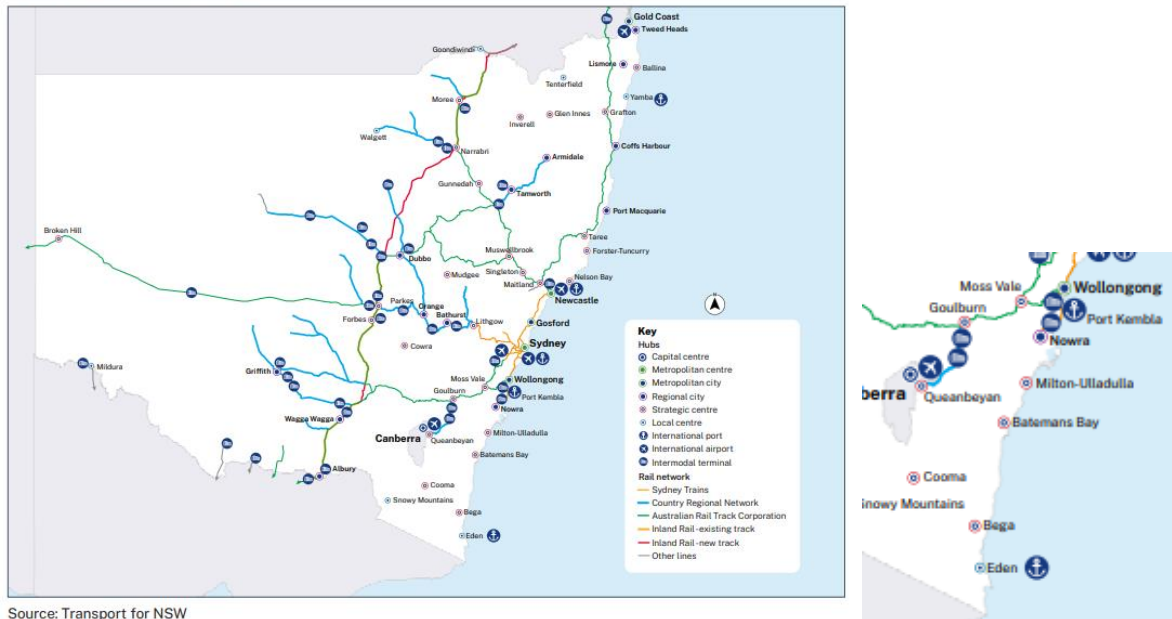
The current status of the escarpment road crossings is shown below.
 Further comments will be made in the section related to Climate Change.

Route Name	Capability	Current Status
Bulli Pass	GA Vehicles	Land slip issues, currently undergoing repairs
Mt Ousley/ Picton Rd	3+2/3 lanes for PBS/ A-double	
Illawarra Hwy (Macquarie Pass)	GA Vehicles	Land slip repairs, currently undergoing repairs
Moss Vale Rd (Kang Valley)	GA Vehicles	Land slip issues , currently undergoing repairs
Main Road 92	B-doubles to Nerriga	No HV access beyond Nerriga
Kings Hwy	GA Vehicles	
Snowy Mountains Hwy	GA Vehicles	Land slip issues , currently undergoing repairs
Imlay Rd	A-double	(currently Forestry NSW road)



The NSW rail network

Figure 2.5 NSW rail network



Source: Transport for NSW

The NSW Rail network within the SEATS region consists of four main rail lines.

- The South Coast Line running from Sydney through Wollongong and terminates at Bomaderry on the northern side of the Shoalhaven River.
 - Two loops service Port Kembla between Coniston Junction and Unanderra
 - This South Coast Line also provides rail access directly to Port Botany
- The Main Southern Line running from Sydney through Picton, Goulburn, Yass to Wagga and Melbourne
 - This Main South Line branches south of Goulburn into the South Line to Canberra
 - The Tarago Inter Modal Terminal serves as the transfer point for putrescible waste from Sydney (Rhodes) to the Woodlawn BioReactor.
- The Moss Vale – Unanderra Line links the Main Southern line at Moss Vale down the Illawarra Escarpment to Unanderra and provides access to the Port Kembla loops.
 - Freight trains travelling to Bomaderry are required to use either of the Port Kembla loops to change direction as they also do for the reverse journey.

A proposal to Sydney Trains & T4NSW has been put by the Manildra Group to provide a siding for train turnarounds between Unanderra and Coniston Junction, thus eliminating the delays in having to use the Pt Kembla loop for each train journey (twice/day)

Over 7m tonnes per annum of grain moves between west of Yass to Bomaderry via rail (via Moss Vale, Unanderra, Pt Kembla loop to Bomaderry) or road (via Wilton/Picton Rd/Mt Ousley Rd to Bomaderry). Road transport is used when rail possessions are in place or for track maintenance after an incidence or to manage peak requirements.

The Current Freight Task in South Eastern NSW

SEATS acknowledges Figure 2.6 Interstate Freight Movements by Volume. Much of the Freight within the SEATS region is intrastate movements with some large quantities being moved regularly, for example:

- 6m tonnes per annum of quarry products by Boral, including by rail from Port Kembla to Marulan via Moss Vale line
- 7m tonnes per year of wheat grain between western NSW and Bomaderry by the Manildra Group (at least 1 train/day)
- 60% of production from Manildra Group's facility is exported in containers from Bomaderry by rail through Port Botany (at least 1 train/day)

Containerisation of export freight is basically locked in as the only way to move processed product by ship. Two of the largest exporters of containerised freight for export are the Manildra Group at Bomaderry and Visy at Tumut. Both of these carry the containers to the port by rail but with Pt Botany being the only container port, trains manoeuvre through the rail network and bypass Pt Kembla which according to NSW Ports will not be ready for some time with Newcastle being supported as the next container port for NSW.

Port Kembla is one of the major entry points for vehicles into Australia. This activity supports a lot of activity in Wollongong/Pt Kembla and has utilised much of the previously semi-developed industrial land in the Wollongong region.

In recent years the dynamic of the current road freight task is seeing more A-double movements into/out of Bomaderry via Mt Ousley Rd/Picton Rd to Hume Hwy because of improvements to the M1 Princes Motorway to Nowra/Bomaderry. Hauliers are being observed utilising these larger HV configurations and ignoring the escarpment mountain passes that are restricted to GA vehicles and have been plagued by land slippages and prolonged road maintenance activities.

A similar circumstance is also becoming evident on the far south coast with hauliers increasingly using the A-double configurations via Imlay Rd to join the Monaro Hwy near Bombala rather than the delays through roadworks due to land slips on the Snowy Mountains Highway for GA vehicles.

Two Govt Policy areas are needing to be addressed here:

1. Imlay Rd (and Edrom Rd to Eden Port) are both owned and controlled by Forests NSW. SEATS believes that it is time to seriously investigate the transfer both of these predominantly freight roads to Transport for NSW and bring them within the classification system of other State freight links.
2. Sydney Trains, that administer the Sydney rail network (which includes the south coast line to Bomaderry), would appear to have an understandable preference for passenger trains to the exclusion of freight services. However this should not be the case. Several proposals by the Manildra Group and supported by SEATS and Shoalhaven City Council to improve the performance of the Sydney Trains network for the betterment of both freight and passenger services fail to gain traction when put to T4NSW. They remain active proposals in the SEATS Priority Projects Strategic Statement – 2024.

The Changing Freight Task

Freight volumes will grow as populations grow! However there are certain freight tasks that will grow in accordance with increased CapEx by industry together with the specialisation of certain processing activities in established localities.

- Port Kembla will continue to grow as a vehicle import centre. This activity is ideally suited to the major centre of Sydney and draws advantage from plentiful areas of semi-serviced industrial land in and around Wollongong.
- Tarago on the Southern Rail Line will grow because of the need for Sydney to dispose of its putrescible waste and provisions by the Woodlawn Waste BioReactor to expand its operation will require expansion of the Tarago IMD.
- The Manildra Group is currently building capacity at Bomaderry to quadruple production. This will generate a need for significantly more grain to be freighted in (preferably by rail); more export containers needing to go to Pt Botany by rail; more road freight of ethanol to fuel distribution centres; Manildra have also made it aware that the IMD that is being built as part of the project will be available to other Shoalhaven based manufacturers to utilise to transit containerised export freight including chemicals, nutraceuticals, building components etc.
- The inter-relationship of the forested areas in the SE part of the state with timber processors on the Far South Coast, areas around Bombala and Tumut and in the ACT will also drive freight growth
- Proposals around green steel, hydrogen fuel generation and offshore renewable energy proposals off Illawarra and Gippsland are all capable of generating freight growth not only on road and rail but also on the waterways along the coast.

SEATS wants to re-emphasise that the growth in freight volumes will not be in direct proportion to population at all centres. Certain locational advantages by industry, whether these be good or bad, but significant investments have been made and these are not readily about to be abandoned. The planning implications alone will need for a major play by government if this is about to change.

Striving for improvements to Freight Productivity

The use of the higher productivity vehicles is clearly the way of the future to allow industry to improve freight productivity. This agenda is being driven by the Australian Government and the haulage industry.

Herein lies the dilemma! Three considerations are mentioned below.

A major issue is that to design and construct a road fit for purpose for these vehicles, the mountain passes that we have today would probably not be built in their current form or location. This legacy is now working against the nation, and maintenance agencies, as the knowledge about the continual day to day use and the extreme weather events are creating circumstances that cannot satisfy today's demanding requirements.

The two escarpment crossings not built on mountain passes in the 1800s are:

- Main Road 92 between Nowra and Nerriga is a crossing with a gentle incline and has been built (and approved) for PBS 2 vehicles BUT it does not extend

westward beyond Nerriga towards Tarago (for connection to Monaro Hwy) and Goulburn (for connection to the Hume Hwy).

- Imlay Rd is also a gentle incline from the Princes Hwy at Womboyn, south of Eden, to its intersection with the Monaro Hwy at Rockton. As said elsewhere in this submission Imlay Rd is under the management of Forests NSW. SEATS supports the transfer of this built asset to T4NSW.

Another issue is management of driver fatigue which is driving the provision of HV Rest Areas as an essential safety feature for long and medium haul routes. SEATS strongly agrees that provision of HV Rest Areas is inadequate on the Kings, Monaro and Princes Highways in this regard. Further, HV Rest Areas need to be considered available for HVs travelling in either direction with safe ingress and egress points.

The issues of first/last mile access is more than suiting the environment and planning guidelines. Buffers which allow expansion of the access corridor to allow the movement of higher productivity HVs, queuing lanes at intersections etc need to be allowed when these corridors are planned and built. A 20m wide easement will not cut it for an industrial intersection!

Climate Change

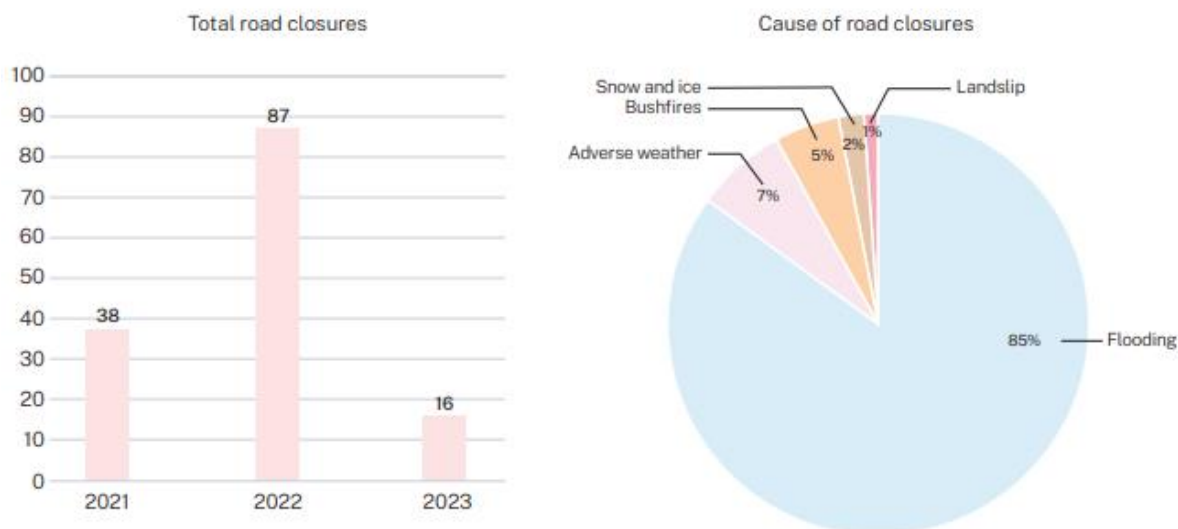
The coastal aspects of the Great Dividing Range on the east coast of Australia are playing a part in the affects of Climate Change. This is particularly evident on the South Coast of NSW and the interplay with the East Coast Low weather patterns. As shown in the Freight Policy Reform paper, the incidence of road closures is increasing due to flooding (and land slips). On the south coast the intensity and frequency of rain storm events is becoming quite noticeable on the road and rail assets.

2022 was an exceptional year for intense storms and the consequences. Apart from extinguishing the Black Summer Bush fires that started in 2020 that ravaged north Gippsland and south east NSW, the damage and devastation left on major, and minor, roads that crossed the Illawarra Escarpment is still being repaired in 2024 with several years yet to resolve the current land slippages. All mountain passes, with the exception of two, fall into this category and repeat incidences are most likely

The recent weather events have caused land slippages and rock falls on the key mountain passes that cross the Illawarra Escarpment between the coast and the tablelands causing several of these routes to be closed for prolonged periods for major reconstruction works. East Coast Lows (ECL) are intense “**low**” pressure systems which occur, on average, several times each year off the eastern coast of Australia, in particular southern Queensland, NSW and eastern Victoria.

These ECLs have brought about a new dimension to the escarpment issue. At some points during 2022 closures and restrictions on the various mountain passes placed imposts on hauliers and industry, including tradesmen, travelling between Illawarra, Shoalhaven and the Tablelands. Thankfully Mt Ousley Rd held up although subject to lane restrictions. SEATS believes a second east-west freight route is required south of the Shoalhaven River and Main Road 92 forms the basis for this alternate all weather route for heavy vehicles.

Figure 3.5 Road closures on key freight routes 2021-2023



Source: Transport for NSW

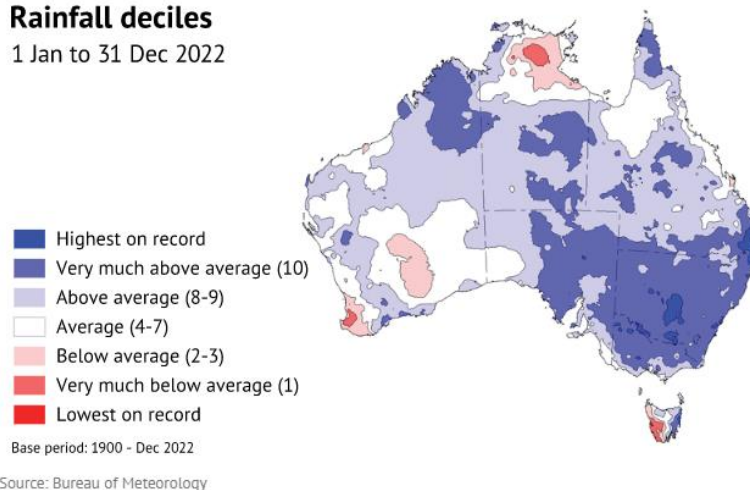
The influence of the ECLs can be seen in the table below when in 2022 the annual rainfall totals were 100% above (double) the annual long term average for each of Sydney, Camden, Albion Park and Nowra airport BOM weather stations.

Annual Rainfall in mm

Airports	Mean Rainfall	Mean Days >1mm	Annual Rainfall in mm					
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Sydney	1093.4	96.1	871.4	831.4	749.4	1225.4	1198.4	2274.8
Camden	823.2	49.7	911.8	528.5	393.6	1026.6	1022.5	1704.4
Albion Park	998.1	82.6	971.8	637.2	596.0	1266.6	1138.8	2585.4
Moss Vale AWS	958.4	93.0	714.4	612.3	446.8	1247.2	1113.4	1857.8
Goulburn	575.2	69.6	488.0	388.6	350.4	763.0	943.8	1028.4
Nowra	1133.1	65.8	814.0	751.2	577.4	1673.2	1280.0	2535.4
Canberra	615.4	72.0	486.0	472.0	358.6	790.0	912.6	892.4
Moruya	852.6	78.5	843.2	724.6	492.4	1253.0	1189.4	1379.2
Cooma	539.5	69.3	563.4	342.8	318.6	572.8	847.4	648.6
Merimbula	783.8	72.7	564.4	491.8	425.0	1019.0	1325.4	1072.8
Bombala AWS	650.9	81.4	592.8	494.6	385.6	655.4	1011.0	1025.4
Mallacoota	939.8	92.4	801.8	758.6	595.2	1002.8	1264.6	1133.0

Rainfall deciles

1 Jan to 31 Dec 2022



These events caused medium/long term interruptions on several of the mountain passes, specifically Mt Ousley Rd, Macquarie Pass (Illawarra Hwy), Jamberoo Mt Pass, Moss Vale Road through Kangaroo Valley (Cambewarra Mt & Barrengarry Mt), Kings Hwy (Clyde Mt), Snowy Mountains Hwy (Brown Mt). The South Coast Rail line and the Moss Vale to Unanderra Rail Line were also affected and were unavailable to freight trains for extended periods.

Many of these routes are regular haulage routes for freight moving up or down the escarpment. They are also commuter routes for workers and tradesmen going about their regular work on both the coast and tablelands.

Supply chain effects were experienced by industry within the region as well as for customers/suppliers outside the region, including meeting shipping timetables.

This scenario is not only a recent event. In the 1980s a large section of the South Coast Rail Line was washed away in a storm in the northern suburbs of Wollongong. The repairs took months having a major disruption to freight and commuter services.

SEATS shares with industry, the concern that the reliability and sustainment of the key east-west escarpment freight crossings needs to be prioritised by Governments in the maintenance and upgrade programs. The business and reputation of regional processors can be influenced by prolonged supply chain disruptions.

The Illawarra Escarpment and the Freight Task

Whilst not unique to the South Coast of NSW, the existence of the Illawarra escarpment is a real barrier to the movement of freight. There are only a few of the mountain passes that are suited to HVs that connect the coastal plain to the Southern Tablelands 600-800m above and these are:

- Bulli Pass (Princes Highway at Bulli to Appin/Campbelltown)
- Mount Ousley Rd (Princes Highway between Hume Hwy at Wilton and Wollongong)
- Macquarie Pass (Illawarra Highway between Hume Hwy at/near Moss Vale and Albion Park on the Princes Motorway)
- Route B73, Moss Vale Rd through Kangaroo Valley (between Hume Hwy at Moss Vale and Princes Hwy at Nowra/Bomaderry)
- Main Road 92 (between Nerriga and Princes Hwy at Nowra) This route is a PBS2 link but is restricted westward beyond Nerriga by a section of road weight limited to 15t
- Kings Highway (between Canberra/Queanbeyan and Batemans Bay)
- Snowy Mountains Highway (between the Monaro Hwy near Bombala to Princes Hwy near Bega)
- Imlay Rd, a Forestry Commission road between Monaro Hwy south of Bombala and Princes Hwy near Eden
- Monaro Highway (Princes Hwy at Cann River in Vic to Bombala, ACT and Hume Hwy through to Sydney)

There are 2 rail lines that cross the Illawarra Escarpment:

- South Coast Rail Line (from Sutherland to Bomaderry shared by freight and passenger trains)

- Moss Vale Line (an exclusively freight line from the Main Southern Line at Moss Vale to the South Coast Line at Unanderra, for Port Kembla and Bomaderry)

The importance of Mt Ousley/Picton Rd in fulfilling this freight task cannot be understated in the movement of freight between the coast and the tablelands. Clearly Mt Ousley/Picton Rd is the most important escarpment crossing, BUT what is the fallback position within NSW to accommodate HML/PBS vehicles and share the burden for freight up/down the 6-800m mountain escarpment should Mt Ousley Rd fail.

A second crossing, at least, needs to be identified and readied to perform this task. This selection needs to be cognisant of the type and importance of the freight on the national/state/regional/local need and the detour distances to satisfy the freight tasks involved.

In February 2023, SEATS resolved to:

- a) Strongly support the upgrading of the Mt Ousley/Picton Rd corridor, including the works near the University of Wollongong
- b) Request that Transport for NSW undertake a “what if” investigation on the provision of road and rail links across the Illawarra Escarpment with the view to identifying and supporting a second east-west road freight route which can satisfy future freight requirements in most natural disasters.

Strategic Issues

This submission has concentrated on freight movement around major freight generators that are seeking to utilise the most productive and efficient modes of transport to move raw, semi-processed and finished goods around the state, nation and globe.

The freight supply chain has a different dynamic from distribution warehouses to the point of sale. The logistics for this part of the supply chain are more pragmatic in meeting delivery schedules over shorter haulage distances. The vehicles used are more suited to the delivery or receipt dockages and local road conditions.

As distribution forwarders want to move to more productive vehicles, road assets dictate otherwise to find suitable solutions. As mentioned above, the first/last mile is more than suiting the environment and planning guidelines. Buffers which allow expansion of the access corridor to allow the movement of higher productivity HVs, queuing lanes at intersections etc need to be allowed when these corridors are planned and built. A 20m wide road easement will not cut it for an industrial intersection!

The Discussion Questions

SEATS specifically discussed these questions at its meeting held in Goulburn on Friday 17th May. The responses are given in point format for ease of explanation.

Metropolitan rail freight

- There needs to be a greater acceptance by Sydney Trains that freight trains need to share parts of the metropolitan rail network
- The metropolitan rail priority for passenger trains works against freight rail –
 - More freight slots are required through the Sydney network
 - Longer trains using non peak slots could be part of a solution
 - A siding between Unanderra and Coniston Junction is required for freight train turnaround
- Where rail freight into ports exists, strong support needs to come from Government for its continuance and expansion to satisfy
 - Export TEUs direct to Pt Botany
 - Grain freight direct to Pt Kembla and processing facility at Bomaderry

Ports and Containerised freight

- Currently containerised freight bypasses Port Kembla to Pt Botany by rail (& road) due to lack of facilities at PK.
- T4NSW (backed by policy statement from the NSW Government) needs to maintain rail access to Pt Botany for containerised freight on (whole) trains (and just not from Meadowbank)
- The Port of Eden is within a deep water embayment (Twofold Bay) with passenger infrastructure on the northern side at Eden and freight & military infrastructure on the southern Edrom shore. This Edrom facility is used by the Royal Australian Navy and commercial freighters taking woodchips to Asia for paper manufacture
- The Port of Eden is located in proximity to the Gippsland and Illawarra offshore renewable energy precincts. Already wind turbine components come in through Port of Eden to terrestrial wind farms in central western NSW via Edrom Rd and Imlay Rd. The provision of HML access to the Port of Eden should always be maintained
- Could there be a new international airport dedicated to air freight adjacent to the Syd-Melb corridor? An expensive alternative but maybe worth consideration.

SEATS Priority Projects that will assist Freight productivity:

Rail

- **Dunmore Siding** – A crossover is required on an already constructed passing loop to make better use of the asset and enable freight trains to have more efficient paths for the expanding freight task on this single track South Coast Line
- **Bomaderry Station Yard Extension** – extension of northern boundary & signally system is required to be undertaken to enable the longer freight trains to be wholly within the section and to allow more efficient access to the Bomaderry rail/road IMD being developed for the expanding freight task

- **Toolijooa Passing Loop** – to progress the implementation of this project to create more efficient paths for freight (and passenger) trains on this single line route between Dapto and Bomaderry
- Ensure **rail access between Bomaderry and Port Botany** is maintained and adequate paths are available for freight trains of up to 1200m.
- Ensure rail access between the **Main Southern Line at Moss Vale and the South Coast Line at Unanderra** is maintained and available to freight trains for an expanding freight task
- Ensure rail access between the **Main Southern Line at Goulburn and the rail/road intermodal at Tarago** is maintained and available to freight trains for an expanding freight task requiring an expanded IMD (Sydney Waste)
- Note: In coming years there will be significant increases in freight in/out of Bomaderry and into/out of the Tarago IMD

Road

- **Barton Highway** - Completion of this section between Yass and ACT Border to improve HV traffic flows (including tourist coaches from northern NSW and Queensland to Canberra and the Ski Fields)
- Establishment of HML route between Cooma and Yass (through ACT) for access to Tumut via Hume Highway and Gocup Rd
- T4NSW seriously consider the transfer of those road assets of Forestry NSW being used primarily for freight, being Imlay Rd & Edrom Rd. These routes to be recognised as important general freight routes and work to classify as PBS compliant road access to Eden Port
- **Improve routes that cross the Illawarra Escarpment** to ensure reliability and resilience for GA freight vehicles.
- Mt Ousley Rd and Imlay Rd be upgraded and maintained for HML vehicles and a “what if” scenario be undertaken by T4NSW should Mt Ousley Rd be unusable.
- Ensure **PBS compliant road access into Pt Kembla** from National Hwy grid is available and that adequate height clearances under bridges are monitored and maintained between Picton Rd and Pt Kembla in both directions.
- Monaro Hwy – continual improvement for intrastate & interstate freight movement

Illawarra Escarpment

- Need to address long term reliability and resilience on
 - Mt Ousley/Picton Rds
 - Imlay Rd & Edrom Rd
 - One other Escarpment crossing that provides freight backup resilience
- Each of the other mountain passes that cross the Escarpment are important for regular commuter access whilst some are not used widely for freight. SEATS acknowledges and supports the progressive upgrades and maintenance regimes on these crossing for community access to services like health, education, business services, airport and rail connections etc

Local freight roads

- Where it exists, ensure that Government programs exist to assist Local Government to upgrade key freight routes off the NSW State network to assist

in freight productivity gains for agricultural produce like forestry, dairy, livestock, ... and quarry products. Assets, requiring enhancement, other than bridges and culverts need to be eligible.

- Enable legislation to allow Local Government to recoup from industry a “fairer” freight levy to maintain its assets utilised to by industry (mainly quarry & timber products) to access the State network. Some of this infrastructure is essential for the growth in the metropolitan area and compensation to local communities is warranted.

Telephony & data transfer

- With modern steps forward in the integration of technology and monitoring of freight and driver safety in HVs, SEATS believes that data and telemetry services need to be provided by existing Telcos to extend their networks to cover remote areas between Bairnsdale in Vic and Ulladulla on the Princes Hwy and Queanbeyan on the Monaro Hwy.
- SEATS acknowledges that this is not a State responsibility, but as a workplace safety issue, HVs using these remote links are not contactable, nor can their HVs be monitored as moving for much of these journeys. Employers seek a better OHS answer.

Upcoming HV fuel sources

- To allow regional industries to obtain the eco-benefits and reduce GHG emissions, there is a need to expand the network of HV charging facilities for electricity & hydrogen into regional NSW

Maintaining motorways for through traffic

- Peak congestion on/off motorways/ major highways needs to be addressed as its own issue. Motorways need to be maintained as providing priority for through traffic including freight vehicles, not for holding queued vehicles waiting to egress the Motorway
- Similarly congestion at onramp merging locations on Motorways, slows travel speeds and introduces crash potential, after which major congestion occurs. A better method to manage ingress merging on Motorways needs to be implemented
- The lack of congestion at peak time on Motorways needs to receive higher priority as this would greatly assist the freight task and flow.

Land use Planning & Industrial Land

- New planning provisions around railway stations could spell potential deathnell for local industry – Unanderra/Coniston, Bomaderry, Moss Vale, Goulburn (NB: on May 26th a 500m exclusion zone was created around the Manildra plant at Bomaderry by Fire & Rescue NSW)
- Last mile solutions to employment lands should favour freight rather than commuters
- Respect that existing freight access routes developed over years between road authorities and industry may have more significant implications on the built and social environment. Betterment is good, but change to satisfy another requirement may not be.

NSW Govt Liaison

- Liaison from peak freight & industry bodies may be available with Govt agencies. More consultations with regional groups like SEATS, with specific regional freight interest, needs to be implemented
- For general access to T4NSW – yes, access is good. But not “in depth” access to “freight” contacts within either road or rail branches
- Rail contacts at T4NSW seem non engaging concerning freight (Sydney Trains)
- There is a need to have “rail contacts” engage with industry groups like SEATS that can bring Industry (like Boral and Manildra) to the table around specific REGIONAL freight issues.

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SEATS Priority Project Strategic Statement – 2024

This Priority Project Statement has been evolved by SEATS (South Eastern Australia Transport Strategy) over many iterations since 1995. This current list of projects represents both physical works required or government policy initiatives that will generate regional economic development through an improved freight network leading to increased productivity and carbon emission reduction.

Set out initially by mode of transport, a state by state statement is also shown below.

AIR	
<p>Access for regional airlines to Sydney Airport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have the Australian Government reform regional access at Sydney Airport, including: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ release trapped slots so regional airlines can build consistent daily schedules, and to make the regional ring fence more usable ✓ smooth, or average, preserved regional slots to ensure the same number of regional slots are available every day in the morning and evening peaks ✓ provide the ability to retime regional slots by up to one hour to help with slot fragmentation
RAIL	
South Coast Rail Line - (Freight div T4NSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Turnout required <u>between Unanderra and Coniston Junction</u> for train turnaround for trains >600m ✓ <u>Dunmore Siding – Crossover</u> (as per Fixing Country Rail application RNSW1385) is undertaken and available to enable freight trains to have more efficient paths for an expanding freight task ✓ <u>Bomaderry Station Yard Extension</u> – extension of northern boundary & signally system (as per Fixing Country Rail application RNSW1392) is undertaken and available to enable freight trains to more efficient access the Bomaderry rail/road intermodal for the expanding freight task ✓ <u>Toolijooa Passing Loop</u> – to progress the implementation of this project to create more efficient paths for freight (and passenger) trains on this single line route between Dapto and Bomaderry
Moss Vale to Unanderra Rail Line – (Freight div T4NSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure rail access <u>between the Main Southern Line at Moss Vale and the South Coast Line at Unanderra</u> is maintained and available to freight trains for an expanding freight task
Southern Line (Goulburn to Canberra) – (Freight div T4NSW)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure rail access <u>between the Main Southern Line at Goulburn and the rail/road intermodal at Tarago</u> is maintained and available to freight trains for an expanding freight task

<p>Undertake the necessary works to deliver the outcomes of Victoria’s Regional Network Development Plan to enable:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Passenger rail services between Traralgon and Melbourne of 20 min in peak times and 40 min off peak with additional trains <u>beyond Traralgon to Bairnsdale</u> ✓ Freight services to utilise the Gippsland rail line efficiently between Bairnsdale and Melbourne by ensuring sufficient passing loops exist to provide schedules/pathways
<p>ROAD</p>	
<p>Barton Highway (T4NSW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Completion of section <u>between Yass and ACT Border</u> ✓ Establishment of HML route <u>between Cooma and Yass (through ACT)</u> for access to Tumut via Hume Highway and Gocup Rd
<p>Crossing the Illawarra Escarpment (T4NSW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Mt Ousley Rd/Picton Rd</u> – continuous improvements with regard to safety & resilience ✓ <u>MR 92 Beyond Nerriga</u> – providing a HV/HML route between Nerriga and the Hume Hwy at Goulburn ✓ <u>Kings Hwy improvements</u> to enable HML access ✓ <u>Snowy Mountains Highway upgrade</u> to address resilience issues caused by mountain pass instability to ensure HV access and over time HML access
<p>Princes Highway (NSW & Vic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Mt Ousley Rd interchange at UoW</u> ✓ <u>Nowra Bomaderry Transport Strategy</u> – progress of studies ✓ <u>PH Upgrade Project:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Jervis Bay Rd intersection ○ JB Rd to Hawkens Rd upgrade ○ Milton Ulladulla Bypass ○ Moruya Bypass ✓ Improvement of section <u>between Batemans Bay and Snowy Mountains Hwy to enable compliance for HML/PBS vehicles</u> (especially crossings at Wagonga Inlet & Brogo River). ✓ Completion of the <u>duplication of the Princes Highway from Traralgon to Sale</u> by the scheduled completion date of mid 2024 ✓ Continue the delivery of the Princes Highway upgrade program through the Gippsland region, including the <u>Sale Alternate Truck route moving to construction asap</u>

<p>Emerging transport freight issues needing to be addressed in Victoria</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ To enable <u>resolution of the Traralgon bypass alignment</u>, this very important project for Gippsland, requires every effort to be made across all Victorian Government Departments involved to determine a way forward as soon as possible. ✓ <u>Transport infrastructure planning within Baw Baw Shire</u> is important to this peri-urban area under the Victorian Government’s Metropolitan Planning Strategy “Plan Melbourne 2017-2050”. SEATS asks that the planning and development funding to ensure future options are not built out with incremental development. ✓ Early planning and design for the PH <u>through Bairnsdale including across the Mitchell River to the eastern and northern town limits</u>, incorporating improved traffic management practices at the PH/Great Alpine Rd intersection, are required to set the agenda for the future duplication of the Princes Highway from Sale to and through Bairnsdale
<p>Continuous improvements to the following corridors in liaison with Local Government to identify local projects to enhance safety and improve productivity for delivering the freight task</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Bass & South Gippsland Highways</u> – including access to the Gippsland Coast Offshore Wind Energy Zone support facilities ✓ Realignment of sections of the <u>Monaro Hwy from Cann River to NSW border</u> ✓ Realignment of sections of the <u>Princes Hwy from Cann River to NSW border</u> ✓ A new statement around Vic North South Access is required here
<p>SEA</p>	
<p>Seaport Access (NSW)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Ensure PBS compliant road access into Pt Kembla</u> from National Hwy grid is available and that adequate height clearances under bridges are monitored and maintained between Picton Rd and Pt Kembla in both directions. ✓ <u>Ensure rail access between Bomaderry and Port Botany</u> is maintained and adequate paths are available to freight trains of up to 1200m.
<p>Seaport Access (Vic)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Ensure PBS compliant road access into Port Hastings and Port Melbourne</u> from National Hwy grid is available ✓ <u>Ensure freight rail access to export sea ports</u>

Priority Project Strategic Statement for NSW

AIR	
<p>Access for regional airlines to Sydney Airport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - have the Australian Government reform regional access at Sydney Airport, including: 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ release trapped slots so regional airlines can build consistent daily schedules, and to make the regional ring fence more usable ✓ smooth, or average, preserved regional slots to ensure the same number of regional slots are available every day in the morning and evening peaks ✓ provide the ability to retime regional slots by up to one hour to help with slot fragmentation
RAIL	
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<p>Seaport Access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure PBS compliant road access into Pt Kembla from National Hwy grid is available and that adequate height clearances under bridges are monitored and maintained between Picton Rd and Pt Kembla in both directions. ✓ Ensure rail access between Bomaderry and Port Botany is maintained and adequate paths are available to freight trains of up to 1200m.

Priority Project Strategic Statement for Victoria

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RAIL	
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