

SEATS Submission to:

House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport Implications of severe weather events on the national, regional, rural and remote road network.

“On that day it appeared that the whole State was alight. At midday, in many places, it was dark as night. Men carrying hurricane lamps, worked to make safe their families and belongings. Travellers on the highways were trapped by fires or by blazing fallen trees and perished. Throughout the land there was daytime darkness.”

(Victorian Government Report **1939**)

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 which 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 east 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.

Context of SEATS and Transport Infrastructure

The SEATS region consists of several regional production areas:

- At the foot of the Illawarra Escarpment, the Illawarra-Shoalhaven is industrialised with steel manufacture, production of chemicals, including ethanol, nutraceuticals, food products, building products.
- The NSW southern tablelands has strong agricultural production, quarry supplies, manufacturing and timber processing.
- The ACT is a major urban area supporting government administration.
- The NSW south coast has a mixed economy with some strong manufacturers in Bega Cheese and the Manildra Group.
- Out of Victoria's Gippsland comes horticultural produce requiring key freight and transport connections into Sydney and to the agricultural processing hub around Bega and Eden Port.
- The Gippsland area also supplies horticultural and processed goods into Melbourne.

The region has significant quantities of inbound and outbound freight, with freight travelling through Ports at Botany, Kembla, Eden, Melbourne and Geelong. The movement of freight to/from and through the region relies on existing road and rail networks. Of these, the State highways (Princes, Monaro, Barton, South Gippsland and Strzelecki) form the backbone of the freight transport corridors.

There are other key freight corridors that enable the east/west movement of freight in NSW across the Great Dividing Range (hereafter called the Illawarra Escarpment) including the M1 Princes Motorway (Mount Ousley Road)/Picton Road. The Monaro Highway is an important inland corridor between metropolitan Sydney and the Gippsland areas within Victoria. There are also the South Coast rail line and the Moss Vale to Unanderra rail line.

Preamble on Impacts of Natural Disaster Events on the SEATS Region and beyond

Before the impacts on road deterioration and repairs are elaborated upon, there are several other significant impacts that are created by natural disasters on the transport network that exist within the SEATS or other regions, which SEATS or its member organisations have identified as needing rectification or improvement to render the existing transport networks sustainable and resilient to extreme natural disaster events. SEATS wishes to elaborate on these deficiencies as they are inter-related and do address the Terms of Reference fundamentals.

From the Shoalhaven Recovery Co-Ordinator (Vincenzo E B DiPietro AM, CSC) in the Shoalhaven City Council Submission to the NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry:

Observations and Overarching Concerns.

'One road in, one road out'. The South Coast of NSW has many roads which are single lane into, and single lane out of each coastal village. For the majority of its length between Nowra and Gippsland in Victoria, the Princes Highway is of a similar single lane configuration. Such road design configuration is a deficiency which presents significant risks, dangers and failures. By way of example, a 12 metre wide road, flanked immediately by trees very much higher than the road is wide, and within which trees are positioned, power poles and cables are single points of

failure for power, evacuation, and entry/exit by emergency services. This single point of failure is not bushfire specific: strong wind/storms, car accident or mischief potentially deliver the same outcome.

- *Mitigation: Future planning should ensure roads cannot be blocked, and power poles and lines cannot be downed by adjacent trees.*

Power. *Most villages and remote dwellings are dependent on single power line transmission of electricity. The risk of power loss needs to be mitigated in future planning. A possible secondary mitigation might include rooftop/solar farm feeds into battery storage to a micro-grid powering each village or aggregation of dwellings. A necessary and tertiary mitigation might be the requirement for diesel back-up generation and a mandated minimum supply of fuel. Existing billing legislation and practices do not accommodate the utilisation of local harvested power for local consumption needs and need to be reviewed and adapted to suit the diversity of community configurations accordingly.*

- *Mitigation. Power assurance for villages and isolated dwellings needs three levels of provision: main grid, solar /battery/microgrid, and diesel generator*

Telecommunications. *The area of coverage and number of telecom masts is primarily a commercial return on investment decision based upon projected usage and customer base. While a reasonable business decision, single, multi-user towers whose coverage area does not overlap adversely affects isolated communities and aggregations of dwellings. Areas within the City of Shoalhaven suffered service outage and severe disruption when both copper and fibre optic telecommunication service to outlying dwellings in Kangaroo Valley and Nowra Hill was out/disrupted from late November to mid-March. To amplify the relatively short distances between full coverage and ‘isolation’, both of these areas are within a two hour drive of the Sydney GPO.*

- *Mitigation. Telecommunications and digital access minimum footprint and restoration obligations on providers needs to be regulated, checked for compliance and enforceable by legislation. Customers must have Government advocacy to represent their service failures, billing and customer service concerns*

Water. *In Shoalhaven, access to primary and essential water switching controls and facilities were seriously affected by fire whether by damaging the controls or by denying access for servicing/technical personnel. This obstruction was in proximity of, or in access paths to the amenity. This had a direct impact (loss of water) in areas where hours later, bushfire attacked and destroyed residential dwellings.*

- *Mitigation. Access paths and adjacent areas surrounding essential controls for LGA utilities and services must have better and more generous clearance areas, accessible and physically secure from any potential for unauthorised interference.*

Diesel fuel: *Access to fuel, diesel fuel in particular, is a matter of national resilience and community security. Along the South Coast, apart from individual farm holdings and that which is held in retail outlet tanks, there is no reserve fuel storage. An urgent assessment of potential fuel needs assuring adequate supply should access be denied or constrained during peak times of tourism and known disaster danger such as bushfire season must be legislated. Compliant fuel reserves should be held and managed in stowages at strategic locations between main urban centres and major cities. This mitigation will address a significant vulnerability to both national reserves and availability during emergency.*

Population/Planning Alignment. *Census data is gathered in the winter months/mid-year. It fails to address the surge in population in isolated villages during holiday season. This leads to a*

significant underestimation of service and amenity requirements and community facilities at times when population can multiply significantly. By way of example, the population of Bendalong/Manyana is multiplied five-fold in holiday season. During the non-holiday periods, only one in five dwellings is lived in. This proves to be a significant failing in understanding minimum road requirements, service provision (doctors, ambulance, hospitals, retail) and other amenities consistent with the population. Shoalhaven City Council submission to the NSW Independent Bushfire Inquiry 6

– *Mitigation. Emergency planning, procedures and social awareness of area specific procedures in emergency through to failing to surge and provide sufficient primary emergency coverage in peak times needs to be planned and prepared.*

SEATS has also observed and resolved:

- That SEATS strongly requests that the governments of NSW and Victoria combine with the Australian government to roll out as a matter of urgency those elements of improvement within the local government areas of Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley and East Gippsland that can be planned, designed and delivered over the next 5 years to be packaged up into a “Princes Highway Resilience Program” to deliver a highway network that will provide safer connectivity for the communities in this part of Australia in all weather and environmental conditions
 - **NOTE:** this is now being delivered at various localities between Wollongong and Port Augusta, by various National and State government partnerships
- That SEATS strongly requests the Australian government ensure that within 5 years all national and state highways achieve a 95% mobile telephony reception coverage and that the rollout commence on the Monaro Highway and the Princes Highway between Sydney and Melbourne
- That SEATS strongly urges the various road, electricity supply and telecommunication agencies to provide easement buffers around all assets to provide continuity of the availability of assets to regional communities in all weather and environmental conditions. Governments and their agencies should review and amend policies that impinge on this outcome being achieved.
 - **NOTE:** In Victoria’s east Gippsland there are areas along the Princes Highway that have been cleared across a number of utility uses – road, power, gas



Take the weather with you (...2022)

In contrast to the 2019/20 Black Summer Bushfires an article in the Sydney Morning Herald on 2/9/2022 by Miki Perkins draws attention to the natural disaster in this “land of flooding rains” which extinguished the Bushfires in 2020 and continued into 2022:

Take the weather with you (...2022) *The heavy rainfall and warm temperatures produced by three back-to-back La Nina events (and a ‘negative Indian Ocean Dipole’) converged to produce a year of soggy weather.*

An unusual trio of climate patterns brought heavy rainfall and an exceptionally wet but warm year to Australia in 2022, with temperatures remaining higher than average against the backdrop of human-induced climate change.

The main climatic influences on Australia in the past year included the La Nina weather pattern and greater-than-average rainfall, according to the Bureau of Meteorology’s annual climate statement.

The big picture makes sense of the unsettled, damp weather across much of Australia in the past 12 months. La Nina persisted through summer, eased during autumn, returned in early September and continued to the end of the year.

This was the third consecutive year of the La Nina climate pattern

– back-to-back La Nina events are not uncommon, three are more unusual.

Climate drivers combined. A “negative” Indian Ocean Dipole in winter and spring also increased rainfall, while a persistent “positive” phase of the Southern Annual Mode – associated with storms and cold fronts that move from west to east – brought rainfall to southern Australia.

Rainfall in Australia was about 25 per cent above the 1961 to 1990 average – at 587.8 millimetres – meaning 2022 was the ninth wettest year on record since 1900.

‘It was the trio of wet-phase climate drivers that stood out in 2022 that caused unusually prevalent easterly winds and drove lots of rainfall over eastern Australia,’ said meteorologist Ben Domensino from forecaster Weatherzone.

Sydney lacked extreme heat, with no days over 32 degrees. In Melbourne, more than 1100 days have passed since the Olympic Park weather station recorded 40 – that’s the longest stretch below 40 for about 50 years.

There was intense, persistent rainfall across much of eastern Australia, with regional riverside communities in Victoria, NSW and Queensland bearing the brunt of severe flooding and the most significant floods occurring at the beginning and end of 2022.

In many parts of the Murray-Darling Basin, flooding was prolonged periods, or on multiple occasions, affecting communities in October and November.

In western Tasmania, much of the north of the Northern Territory and the far south-west of Western Australia, rainfall was below average.

Australia’s national mean temperature was half a degree warmer than the 1961-1990 average. In the tropics, there were severe to extreme heatwave conditions.

In addition to the influence of natural drivers, Australia’s climate on average is 1.47 degrees warmer (margin of error 0.24 degrees) than when national records began in 1910, with most of the warming occurring since 1950.

The sea temperature around nearly all of Australia as a whole was much warmer than average, and the highest on record in large areas of the waters to the north of Australia, and much of the Arafura Sea and the Coral Sea.

The warm waters around Australia influence the climate as they act as a source of moisture through evaporation, which increases humidity, cloudiness and the chance of rainfall.

To the south of Australia, the net extent of sea-ice around Antarctica in February 2022 was the lowest on record. This finding was based on near-continuous satellite imagery since 1979.

Australia's weather will become even more chaotic in coming years and decades, the Bureau of Meteorology found in its recent State of the Climate report, putting pressure on the federal government to strengthen its climate targets.

The Evolving Freight Task

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.

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!

Changing Climate – Natural Disasters

Recent East Coast Lows 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.

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.

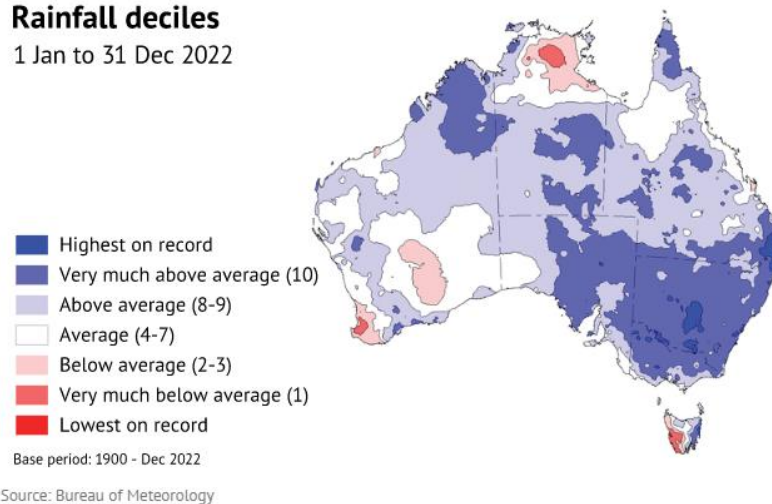
The influence of the ECLs can be seen in the table below when in 2022 the annual rainfall totals were 100% above (double) the annual long term average for each of Sydney, Albion Park and Nowra.

	Annual Rainfall in mm								
	Mean Rainfall	Mean Days	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
		>1mm							
Airports									
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, Macquarie Pass, Jamberoo Pass and Moss Vale Road through Kangaroo Valley. 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.

Summary and assessment of Illawarra Escarpment Issues

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.

A second crossing, at least, needs to be identified and ready 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.

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 Shellharbour)
- Route B73, Moss Vale Rd through Kangaroo Valley (between Hume Hwy at Moss Vale and Princes Hwy at Nowra)
- Main Road 92 (between Nerriga and Princes Hwy at Nowra) This route 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 and Princes Hwy near Eden
- Monaro Highway (Princes Hwy at Cann River 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 Picton Rd/Mt Ousley Rd in fulfilling this freight task cannot be understated in the movement of freight between the coast and the tablelands.

Severe weather events on the national regional, rural, and remote road network.

SEATS did canvas its membership, in particular Local Government Authorities, to formulate the submission response. Several common themes came through:

- Asset replacement incorporating betterment
- Ability to manage the additional work burden
- Changing reporting criteria
- Evidence report of asset condition prior to severe weather event
- Lack of expertise is often involved

Betterment works not covered by Emergency Management Agency funding to include proactive works to avoid future problems

Design & construction of transport structures of various forms were undertaken many years ago. Whilst the engineering standards and documentation are in many instances pre-digital and any responsible asset agency would not replace a damaged asset with the “same”.

The knowledge that would inform the redesign would now be superior through data collection and analysis of the asset’s operational environment. Changing weather conditions and patterns sometimes require upgrades to the existing network. It seems wasteful for EMVictoria or similar agencies to fund the installation of an asset that we expect to fail again in the future. EMV funds would be better spent if they could be invested in proactive ways to address (anticipated) future storm damage via covering the cost for betterment. Even consideration of funding the cost to replace like-with-like, with councils covering the gap to upgrade would be useful.

Ability to manage the program of works

In light of recent experience with natural disasters, the enormity of the circumstances and outcomes from a bushfire, flood, storm event create tasks that demand an enormous work list, requiring evaluation, design, construction co-ordination (even a tender process), contract supervision and the contractors to perform the task.

The difficulty in being able to receive funding and approval to employ extra resources places immense pressure on Council officers who are taking on significantly extra work to manage storm response program of works. Ideally, when a storm event occurs, Council should have a ready panel of pre-approved contractors/resources who can take control of the event and run the program of works. This will allow Council to continue its day-to-day activities whilst extra resources can be used to attend to the storm works.

Co-operation and resource sharing amongst Local Government does exist, but in major natural disasters, the adjacent Councils are usually similarly affected.

A mechanism to allow Local Government staff or contractors to “work out of area to assist in the recovery process” should be investigated and an operational framework developed.

The ‘mate’ network can be activated relatively quickly, but the approvals necessary to approve recovery of such costs do not always meet the criteria.

Utility agencies seem to have reciprocal arrangements for water, electricity emergencies etc but for collecting garbage, removing drainage blockages or clearing fallen trees the way forward is not so clear.

Changing goal posts

The estimating and claiming process is an arduous, tiresome and bureaucratic process. Whilst agencies understand the necessity for such a process, any streamlining or efficiencies that could be made in this area would be greatly appreciated as the current system consumes a significant amount of resources and hampers the urgent restoration of essential public infrastructure.

Greater clarity on what is required would be helpful as it seems as though the goal posts are constantly changing, i.e. invoice formatting that was previously accepted suddenly isn't, photos that couldn't be GPS stamped due to black spots are no longer accepted etc. When determining what information is required, the challenges being faced by the workers out in the field need to be considered. For example, adverse conditions (such as dark, wet, windy nights) make it difficult to capture good quality photo evidence. When attending to storm damage on the road network, the challenges being faced by the worker is vastly different to the challenges being faced by a worker attending to damage on a building site.

Complex claiming processes make it difficult for Council to claim 100% of their legitimate costs. There are situations where approved estimates have been rejected when lodged even though they match. A large amount of administration work then needs to be undertaken in order to have the claims reviewed, which doesn't always end up with the rejection being reversed.

Requirement to prove prior condition and existence of assets.

This is a reasonable requirement for assets such as buildings, however for assets such as roads, drainage structures, signposts etc this is a significant impost on the Council, especially for assets such as unsealed roads where their condition can change rapidly depending on the environmental conditions. In order to prove the existence and condition of the unsealed network, Council will have to invest \$100k (estimate) every 3 years, to have the photo evidence that is currently required. This \$100k will be funded from Council's operating budget, which could be used on projects such as applying waterproofing to approx 300kms every 3 years.

Preferably road assets should be exempt from this requirement. Proof of roads could be attained through the Public Road Register, GIS map of the road network showing if the road is sealed/unsealed and the Road Management Plan (or RMA if there isn't a plan) which proves the level of service / condition a road is maintained to.

Impacts of surrounding land

Councils have an inability to effectively control land outside of the road reserve. i.e. vegetation clearing and runoff concentration contributing to landslips on roads and

soil mobilisation onto roads. Changes to landforms that contribute to road flooding (levees, tracks etc.).

Similarly, preventative treatments often require works beyond the road reserve but this is usually unfunded and requires landowner cooperation.

Lack of expertise

Road damage due to flooding or erosion is often complex and may require expert analysis and advice. Councils typically do not have sufficient expertise to assess these situations to accurately determine level of risk or potential solutions in a timely manner. Specialist external advice needs to be available to Councils for such situations.

Event management causes additional tasking

The mass evacuation as a result of the Currowan Fire incident that occurred in early January 2020 caused significant delays on the Princes Highway with a whole community of travellers stuck for hours on end. Many reports referred to this event as a ‘humanitarian’ crisis. As the bushfire emergency unfolded the Princes Highway



(Source: Illawarra Mercury, Karleen Minney)

was cut in many places. Towns were overwhelmed with the influx to the extent that the evacuation centre only had capacity for the tourist population with residents being told to go home. When people evacuated from the south coast, they also took food and fuel as was recommended by emergency services. However, this resulted in vulnerable towns and villages being left without. This

became a significant issue when these towns and villages were then cut off from further supplies (eg Sussex Inlet, Lake Conjola) leaving traumatised and taxed communities without food and fuel.



(Source: ABC News, Jonathan Hair)

Other suggestions as to how Government should assist Regional Communities in maintaining and repairing the “local road network”

Financial Assistance Programs for Transport Infrastructure

- The pool of R2R funds needs to be increased across the nation
- The pool of R2R funds needs to be indexed against a road construction cost index
- The current “Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program” needs to be split
- The Australian Government’s Bridge Renewal Program needs to have a greater pool of funds available

Recovery assistance Programs

- Develop new guidelines for the Natural Disaster Funding Arrangements to allow increased flexibility to build back better
- Work with State Governments to reduce red tape and provide additional Government resources to enable faster approvals for transport infrastructure construction, maintenance and management, during disaster recovery works

SEATS thanks the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Regional Development, Infrastructure and Transport for accepting its submission and considering the matters raised.

Recent resolutions by SEATS that are relevant to the implications of weather events on the national and regional transport network

- SEATS strongly supports the upgrading of the Mt Ousley/Picton Rd corridor, including the works near the University of Wollongong
- SEATS requests 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
- SEATS shares with industry the concern that the reliability and sustainment of the key east-west escarpment freight crossings need to be prioritised by the NSW Government in its maintenance and upgrade programs.
- SEATS regards the Barton Highway corridor upgrades to be an essential part of the transport infrastructure network linking the Hume Motorway to the ACT and Monaro Highway.
- In the interest of road safety and the “Towards Zero” policy, SEATS believes that adequate Heavy Vehicle Rest Stops need to be provided at driving intervals of 1 hour on all state highways for both directions of travel.
- SEATS strongly requests the Australian government ensure that within 5 years all national and state highways achieve a 95% mobile telephony reception coverage and that the rollout commence on the Monaro Highway and the Princes Highway between Sydney and Melbourne.

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