There was a well attended meeting of the Newell Highway Task Force hosted by Bland Shire Council in West Wyalong on Monday 12th February. Chairman of the Task Force, Parkes Shire Mayor Ken Keith said the meeting was, as usual, very constructive. Items discussed included:

The trial of 1.2 m wide tactile centreline markings has been very successful and has gained international interest representatives of the Roads and Maritime Services reported. Additionally South Australia has adopted the program and will be rolling it out on numerous roads in that state in the near future. Cr Keith said the Taskforce was hopeful that the success of the program will be recognised by the State Goverment and that it will be expanded both on the Newell and other major highways in the future.

The Government funded $30 million Safety Upgrade program has been completed which included clear zones along the full length, improved and consistent signposting and upgraded intersections. "This program has seen significant improvement along the route" stated Cr Keith, "but additional funding is not guaranteed to continue this work."

Construction of two additional overtaking lanes North of Narrabri are nearing completion. "The construction of more overtaking lanes and the expansion of the wide centreline program is viewed by the Task Force as essential and to this end it was resolved that we contact Federal Parliamentarians along the length of the Newell to enlist their support and commitment to future funding should they be elected" Cr Keith said. He went on to say "The Newell is the third largest major traffic route within the state and as such is of major importance for the economy of the country. We will continue to push this fact with both State and Federal governments wherever possible."

The licence requirement to tow and drive large recreational vehicles was also discussed with representatives from the Roads & Maritime Services agreeing to to prepare a report to a future meeting on this important safety matter.

The Newell Highway Promotions committee informed the meeting that the Newell Highway Tourism Guide has been released and is available at Tourist Information Centres and is a must for travellers and visitors.

END OF RELEASE