

New machine for pavement edges

Gosford company Sharpe Brothers has used its new patented roadmending machines to widen a 2km section of Nelson Bay Road in Port Stephens, NSW.

The company used machines from their Sidewinder range to fix drop-offs on the pavement edges, which were as high as 200mm. They then added an extra 1.5m of width on each side of the road. The machines had also been busy in the Hunter Valley and on the Central Coast, fixing roads damaged by floods.

The machines were developed to fix pavement edge drop-offs, which occur in the absence of a pavement shoulder or when an existing shoulder is degraded, creating a sharp drop from the edges of the road to the surrounding ground.

Typically present on two-lane rural roads with low traffic volume, drop-offs can be fatal for vehicles which accidentally veer off the road at a high speed and across the drop which can be as high as 300mm.

To fix the drop-offs, the company uses a road profiler to cut a 1m wide trench along the road edge. This is followed by the purpose-built Sidewinder machine which pours hotmix asphalt into the excavated trench. The machine can apply fill in multiple layers and can use recycled materials as a base. In the Port Stephens



The Sidewinder machine is designed to fix pavement edge drop-offs

project, recycled road gravel, asphalt and roto-mill were used.

Joint managing director Michael Sharpe said the family-owned company had developed the equipment to overcome the problems traditionally associated with road edge repair and widening.

"The usual way of repairing broken edges is to dig up the whole road and then resurface the lot. This causes major traffic

disruption and is very costly," he said.

"We thought there must be a better way so we invested a great deal of time and money to develop this equipment in our Gosford workshop.

"By using these machines, a job which would normally take at least a week, from digging up the road to the final bitumen sealing, can be completed in a day at a much lower cost." ■