

## Road repair innovation trialled on MNC

Narrow roads and soft edges can spell disaster for motorists - so an innovative machine designed to quickly and efficiently fix the problem was a welcome sight in Forster last week, proving popular with representatives from mid-north coast councils who inspected the road repair technology in action today.

Great Lakes Council commissioned the Sidewinder machine, developed by Gosford-based road repair company Sharpe Bros, to widen a 450 metre stretch of road on the Lakes Way.

Representatives from Coffs Harbour, Port Macquarie Hastings, Taree, Gloucester and Great Lakes Councils inspected the shoulder-widening project during a Technical Tour organised for the Institute of Public Works Engineering Association conference, held in Forster on Friday, June 5.

Joint Managing Director of Sharpe Bros, Michael Sharpe, said the family company had spent millions of dollars to develop a series of technologies to repair and widen roads, without extensive reconstruction and traffic delays.

"A job that would normally take at least a week can be completed in a day at a much lower cost," Mr Sharpe said.

"The usual way of repairing broken edges or widening a road, is to dig up a substantial amount of the road before resurfacing, which takes a long time, causes major traffic disruption and is quite costly.

"The Sidewinder process, which extends the life of the road and reduces traffic disruption, uses one purpose built machine to dig a neat trench along the side of the road, and another to fill the excavated trench with hotmix asphalt or even recycled

road gavels."

Mr Sharpe said more councils were using the Sidewinder to fix road edges due to the environmental, safety, quality and cost benefits the process provided.

"Widening roads is a valuable investment for councils, as it provides better access for residents in regional areas, and can reduce the incidence of road accidents in the community," Mr Sharpe said.

According to the Australian Collage of Road Safety, the sealing of crumbling road edges can reduce the number of run-off and head-on crashes by 60 per cent.

Mr Sharpe said Sharpe Bros had recently assembled a 'Quick Response Road Repair Team' to assist councils in Northern NSW which were busy repairing the widespread damage to road surfaces caused by the recent heavy rain and flooding.