

AUSSIE ROAD REPAIR INNOVATION THAT PROTECTS LOCAL JOBS TRIALLED IN THE NORTH WEST

Narrow roads and soft edges can spell disaster for motorists - so an innovative machine designed to quickly and efficiently fix the problem has been a welcome sight in Narrabri, proving popular with representatives from North West councils who inspected the road repair technology in action today.

The Sidewinder machine, developed by Gosford-based road repair company Sharpe Bros, completed road widening works on a 500 metre stretch of Yarric Lake Road, approximately six kilometres west of Narrabri.

Representatives from Narrabri, Liverpool Plains, Gunnedah, Moree, Walgett and Brewarrina Councils inspected the shoulder-widening project to see the Sidewinder operating in conjunction with Narrabri Shire Council's own roadwork team to make roads safer and wider, with the additional benefit of retaining local jobs.

Sharpe Bros Joint Managing Director, Michael Sharpe, said it was more important than ever to protect local jobs and keep costs down for councils so the company had moved away from the traditional contractor arrangement in which all equipment and staff are brought in from other parts of the state.

"We have developed a new solution in which Councils are able to bring in the most effective shoulder-widening technology and a number of highly trained Sharpe Bros road repair specialists to work as part of a united team with their own staff," Mr Sharpe said.

Mr 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.

"Costs are substantially reduced for councils because a project that would normally take at least a week using traditional methods can be completed in a day using the Sidewinder," 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 gravel, hotmix asphalt or even recycled materials."

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.

