

VIEW FROM CANBERRA

July 2018

When you think about technology what do you think of?

The Wright brothers who “allegedly” were the first to fly, flew a thing that really has no real resemblance to what we see flying today. In 1968 the Boeing 737 hit the skies and really not much has changed in the way planes look since then and they probably will not. The passenger plane is expected according to many commentators to look pretty much the same in the future as they look today. But there will be massive differences as well.

The Solar Impulse 2 project plane that circumnavigated the world in 2016 made it, not because the sun could generate enough energy each day to allow it to fly, but because they worked out how to use the amount of energy that the sun could produce each day more efficiently. They turned the energy equation upside down and said, it is not about how much energy we need to produce through the solar panels to achieve the around the world flight but how we best use the energy the panels can collect each day.

The next iteration of technology as it relates to planes will be about energy use, it will not be solar but electric. As the battery technology gets better this reality comes closer and the whole issue of aircraft noise and airports disappears, aircraft emissions become zero depending on the source of the electricity to charge the batteries and who knows how fast these things might go.

My point is that all around us transport and mobility is changing and soon we will have an all-electric autonomous plane doing the job, probably still with pilots or “safety drivers”.

In thinking about all of this, I ask - why are humans quite content to sit in the back of the “tin cigar” and travel thousands of miles in a single flight for up to 17 hours without blinking an eye? And yet future land transport mobility and the changes in a Mobility as a Service world seems to be so hard to believe?

Sure there are some commentators who are off the beam and think it is all going to happen tomorrow and everyone is going to travel around in an individualized transport pod next year.

Most transport experts are presenting what I would call realistic future scenarios that are true because the technology is already here but even more true because if we don’t change the way we travel today, to a new paradigm of mobility, then population growth and vast urbanisation are going to bring our cities to a standstill.

Cities worldwide already hold a large majority of the total population of a country. In other words if we do nothing we are in the shit. And in simple terms that means the political impetus is already palpable and when a polmie starts to understand the problem the solutions tend to come much faster than usual. This is one of those “perfect storm” political and societal moments we are in.

Mobility and travel choice change is not only inevitable, it is necessary. The current mobility transport paradigm is not going to cut it in meeting the future needs of the economy, environment or individuals.

Bus Australia Network



VIEW FROM CANBERRA

It is not often that global change is so obviously seen on the horizon. Usually it creeps up on you in history and you reflect on it through an historical lense and you say “not like the good old days”.

Things are changing so fast due to a range of megatrends related to technology advancements, economic and demographic developments to name three that mean you can see and feel the change and the “good old days” seem like last week.

You don’t have to be Nostradamus to see what is happening today and what is coming. That is why the BIC conference program is so focused once again on the “nearby” future because change is only just around the corner and your business will depend on being ready to adapt and be part of the delivery of a much wider range of mobility services.

So get organised and plan to be in Cairns from October 7-10 to ensure your business mobility future. Visit www.movingpeople.com.au.

Bus Australia Network

