

BIC COLUMN

NOVEMBER 2012

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

Well another BIC National conference is over and from my perspective there were some positive and “not so” positives but definitely more compliments than criticisms. The reality is you can't please everyone in a diverse industry like ours whether you are a supplier, an operator, a politician or a government or departmental representative. The Conference engages a very broad audience and to get the subject matter right for everyone is nigh impossible but I think this year we had a good balance of policy, politics, technology and industry topics.

It is clear that the BIC “Moving People” policy focus is the right focus and we need to stick to our “mantra” and continue to push our message out to all governments. Just as importantly, individual operators need to push our message on the ground with your own State and Federal members of parliament, and don't forget local government. Now is a good time to get in your Federal Members ear and let them know what your vote will depend on with a Federal election next year

A frequent comment made to me at and after the conference was about the hard line message to all political parties that BIC Chairman Wayne Patch delivered whenever he addressed the Conference, and most importantly when he addressed the Mercedes - Benz Gala dinner at Parliament House on Monday night. In attendance were Minister Albanese, Shadow Minister for Transport, Warren Truss, Greens spokesperson for Transport Lee Rhiannon and more than 20 other Members, Senators and advisers to Government.

The message was clear, we need each political party to develop cogent policies that focus on transit and how we move people. The Government was recognised for what it has achieved in the “Moving People and Cities” space, the Coalition identified as a policy vacuum with much work to do to convince our Industry and our passengers and the Greens recognised as pro – public transport but pre-occupied with light rail at the expense of making decisions and choices based on the right mode for the right place, at the right time and budgetary realities.

The Industry makes no apologies for speaking the truth. There is no use pandering to the whims of politicians and parties who continue to flounder when it comes to strong leadership. It is BIC's role to tell them what we think is important, influence them to act and ensure it makes a difference at the ballot box. I think we achieved this at the Conference.

We carry 1.5 billion passengers a year and as recognised in the session titled Public Transport, Polls and Politics just about every poll taken by all variety of organisations and

professional pollsters has identified that people believe the Federal Government has a role in public transport. This goes way beyond just providing roads to putting in place policies and programs that assist States get the delivery of public and active transport right.

The Conference once again endorsed the role of the BIC as being focussed on

- Research
- Evidence based policy development
- Advocacy

In this sense the Conference heard that the foundation of the next 12 months advocacy efforts running into the Federal election will be focussed on 3 key research projects that will form the basis of BIC's work program for the next 5 years.

1. Moving People – Solutions for a Liveable Australia – the second Moving People report – November 2012
2. Moving People 2030 Taskforce report – co sponsored by the ARA, TTF,UITP,ALGA, Heart Foundation ,CPF and PIA. – March 2013
3. Rapid Transit and Australia Report – February 2013

The Conference heard that BIC will continue to lead the Moving People policy debate. BIC will continue to present strong and well researched arguments. BIC will continue to advocate for these to be adopted by all political parties and Government agencies at a Local, State and Federal level.

The 'not so' positive of the conference was the number of operators at the conference. Sure companies representing 80% of the fleet on the road were in attendance. Sure Canberra is not Fiji and sure there is a lot going on in NSW and Vic and QLD and WA in relation to tendering and contract negotiation, so it may be understandable.

The important thing is that we need to get small, medium and larger operators attending the conference from all sectors of the industry; there is something in the BIC Conference for everyone, so mark you dairy for next year;

Adelaide 2013, Sunday October 27 to Wednesday October 30

See you there, if not before