

BIC Column May 2014

In Kenny Rogers' famous song the joker knows when to hold em and when to fold em, in our lobbying the BIC goes further and knows when to work with the hand we're dealt.

During the election campaign, when then Opposition Leader and now Prime Minister Tony Abbott spoke about roads and not public transport being the Federal Government's "knitting", this was a setback from the progress we had seen under the previous Federal Government in taking a role in how we move people in Australia.

But in adversity there is always opportunity, which is why in September 2013, a fortnight after the election, the BIC wrote to the NSW Transport Minister, Premier, Federal Transport Minister and Prime Minister to present our case for bus priority being included on Federally funded road projects.

We identified the WestConnex as "an opportunity for low cost improvements to public transport services in the area through the use of priority measures such as segments of dedicated roadway for buses and high occupancy vehicles, and signal priority."

It was great to see that the NSW Government in their design for the project will allow separated bus lanes to be added to the surface of Parramatta Road between Burwood and Leichardt, once a tunnel is built under that section of road. The West Connex project is estimated to double the speed of bus travel along its route and make travelling by bus a more attractive option for commuters in the area.

This is a good template for how major road projects in cities can work in future and the Bus and Train Tunnel project in Brisbane, replacing the Cross River Rail, is another example of buses being included in future transport planning.

There is something to build on here and the BIC will keep lobbying in this area to ensure wherever Federal money is spent on roads that consideration for bus priority and local links to public transport features in the way that the project is designed.

This month the Government's announced details of its Emissions Reduction Fund (ERF). The ERF will see the Government purchase emissions reductions from businesses, governments and other groups that take measures or implement programs which will reduce carbon emissions.

The crediting and purchasing elements of the ERF will start following the repeal of the carbon tax. The safeguard mechanism will start on 1 July 2015. All elements will be administered by the Clean Energy Regulator.

There will be opportunities for bus operators, manufacturers and some service providers to put forward auction bids under the ERF, so it is important that you keep informed about this policy by following the BIC's updates on this matter.

Over the next few months the BIC will seek consultation with the industry on how initiatives for lowering carbon emissions involving bus operators, manufacturers and service providers could work. Stay informed about the ERF by visiting the following link at the BIC's Ozebus website regularly <http://ozebus.com.au/solutions-for-moving-people/technical-environment-safety>.

Information for businesses that want to display at the Australasia Bus and Coach Expo is now available at Expo Web Central www.ozebus.com.au/expo. Expo Web Central is the one stop for information about exhibiting at the Expo.

Information about registration, accommodation, events and much more for delegates will be available at www.ozebus.com.au/delegates so visit the page and mark the Conference and Expo in your diary Sunday September 28 to Wednesday October 1 at the Gold Coast.