

VIEW FROM CANBERRA

March 2021



The BIC secretariat charging on

To the many readers of the regular View from Canberra, you will know of the recent sad passing of BIC's Executive Director, Michael Apps.

The BIC secretariat is committed to keeping this column going as we see it as an important reflection on issues of the day, relating to government activities and industry broadly. Over the coming months, members of the BIC secretariat will contribute to this column – so please keep reading us – there will be something in here for everyone!

The BIC has been pedalling hard over the last few months, as our friendly bureaucrats came out from under their covid-doonas. The BIC has responded to a number of Inquiries and Regulation Impact Statements, notably, the National Transport Regulatory Reform, the Heavy Vehicle Emission Standards for Cleaner Air, and the Fair Work Amendment (Supporting Australia's Jobs and Economic Recovery) Bill 2020. We will shortly provide a response to the consultation draft from the Infrastructure and Transport Ministers on its National Road Safety Strategy 2021-30.

The BIC has also established an industry advisory group for the long distance and coach tourism sector (LDTCC). The formal establishment of this group in recent weeks is timely in view of the recent announcement (March 11) by the Prime Minister to award subsidised travel airfares to select regions across Australia. The government, particularly, has received rebuke from the LDTCC sector as long-distance tourist coach - decimated by border closures and reduced tourist activity, was omitted from the initiative.

In the pre-covid era, some 8,000 coaches provided mixed-use passenger services (charter, school and long-distance). It is estimated that there has been up to 75% to 90% reduction in work across the industry during the pandemic. The LDTCC sector is recovering very slowly and this growth will be impacted as job keeper ends in March. Government seems to have forgotten that the LDTCC sector contributes directly and indirectly up to \$2 billion to the Australian economy. If you do the sums even a 50% reduction in the industry is economy destroying.

The BIC will soon release our Australian Bus & Coach Industry 2020 snapshot report which includes a chapter on the long distance and coach tourism sector and is exemplar of the material that Industry needs to evidence the valuable contribution of this sector to Australia's economy. The report also supports sector sustainability with a 10-year strategy for government and industry adoption. The 2020 snapshot report provides a detailed analysis of the bus and coach industry for the past decade with statistics relating to manufacturing output, employment, the fleet on the road and bus operations.

While the 'front-face' of the BIC is kept busy, the 'back-room' is also very hard at work, particularly in national heavy vehicle law reform, disability standards for accessible public transport and the implementation of road vehicle safety standards. There is a lot going on with the Department of Infrastructure and Transport with the enforcement of new legislation over the next 2 years; legislation and reform agendas that heavily impact on the manufacturing and supply sector and the operation of the fleet on the road. We inform industry of our progress on legislative matters and upcoming reform agendas via the national bus & coach industry bulletin. New subscribers can be kept in the loop by sending an email to communications@bic.asn.au.

Bus Australia Network



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The QBIC conference on the Gold Coast (April 9-11) is the first significant industry event post-covid and the BIC secretariat will be there to support QBIC and take the opportunity to convene our first council meeting for 2021.

The Bus Australia Network (BAN) is charging ahead with their 'back-to-normal' seminars and conferences. BusNSW will be hosting the biennial Australasia Bus & Coach Expo at the Sydney Show Grounds September 29 and 30. BusVic are holding their traditional Maintenance Conference with a scaled-down trade show June 28-29. The BIC secretariat will be there to support the BAN events.

These industry events are important initiatives that bring industry together to trade stories, discuss issues, problem solve, meet old friends, make new mates and most importantly 'do business'. The OzeBus website has a comprehensive national and international events calendar for industry. Mark your diaries at www.ozebus.com.au

The BIC is currently preparing the plenary and social program for the national bus conference to be convened at the Sofitel Brisbane Central November 21-24. We will keep you regularly updated in this column of what you can expect over the 3-day conference.

The BIC secretariat is committed to the *moving people* vision that enhances the sustainability and liveability of Australia's cities and regions by using bus and coach transportation. Readers can connect with us on 02 6247 5990 or by email to enquiries@bic.asn.au.

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