

VIEW FROM CANBERRA

9 August 2021

Navigating Change

Reflecting on the human shift and adaptation to the current pandemic crisis, Heraclitus comes to mind with his words - "Change alone is unchanging". A philosopher from Ancient Greece times, Heraclitus - nicknamed "The Obscure" - was known for his cryptic utterances. In this time of global obscurity, it is little comfort that the inevitability of change will never change. However, it is fair to say that uninvited change often results in vast improvements in our lot in life. Change presents the opportunity to transform and to be inventors of innovation.

Massive change is evident in our own *moving people* industry. Public transport has been a major change-driver over the past century. The growth patterns of Australia's cities, for example, could never have happened without the introduction of horse-drawn trams (circa 1885) which sparked the spread of inner-city suburbs.

At the 1911 Australian census, 42% of the population lived in rural areas; by 2006, only 12% of Australians were located in rural areas. In 1901, 37% of Australians lived in metropolitan urban areas (capital cities and surrounding suburbs). In 2006, 57% of Australians were living in metropolitan urban areas. Today, nine in ten Australians live in urban areas.

By the 1930's, buses started to become the new work horse for *moving people*. The 1930's also saw the use of buses to carry school children. Tasmania, as an example of change transformation, adopted a central school system replacing isolated one-teacher schools; a development only made possible by the innovative thinking to use private buses to transport the students.

When the founding federation fathers crafted the Australian Constitution, they could not have imagined what our cities would look like today. They could not have imagined that our major cities would have populations in the millions or how the commercial combustion engine would change travel patterns and a city's development. They could not have imagined that more than 80% of Australia's population would live in cities in 2015 and that agricultural production and trade in primary produce and mineral resources would not be the main drivers of our local economy.

The Bus Industry Confederation itself would never have formed if it wasn't for the rapid growth being experienced in the bus and coach industry – in bus operations and in bus manufacturing. The BIC had its beginnings in its predecessor the Australian Bus and Coach Association (ABCA) which was established in 1981 with membership initially comprising bus and coach private operators and later all state bus representative bodies. In 1994, the ABCA was renamed the Bus Industry Confederation. The transition was completed in 1996, during which time, bus industry suppliers also became members. In 2002, the BIC secretariat was established in Canberra to create and provide a stronger voice for the bus and coach industry in national policy making and advocacy in federal and state parliaments.

After a successful 2 decades as the national bus policy change-driver, the BIC has made some recent internal changes of our own. On 2 August, we expanded our team with the appointment of a new Executive Director - Roz Chivers. Roz brings a strong knowledge-base to the BIC with vast experience in policy and advocacy. Roz has previously worked for the Australian Local Government Association, the Department of Premier and Cabinet



VIEW FROM CANBERRA

(NSW) and the ACT Government on a range of major projects in policy and program development and implementation.

Roz comes to the BIC with an enthusiasm for public transport. Roz has always been an advocate for PT and was a project lead on various initiatives such as the development of the Belconnen to City Busway project and a range of behaviour change projects to encourage people to use public or sustainable transport as part of their daily commute.

The BIC isn't quite done with 'change' just yet. We are continuing with the planned National Conference in Brisbane November 21 to 24, the theme of which is "Moving People – Navigating Change". We have put in place some small plans to navigate covid-change but we remain hopeful that much of Australia will be covid-safe or on the way to being so. Mark your diaries. We will be launching the program in August and hope to see you face to face in Brisbane soon.

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.

Bus Australia Network

