

8 October 2021

The BIC launches a new industry report

Every day, far more Australians are transported by bus and coach on the nation's road network than are moved by rail, even in our largest capital cities. Buses provide an alternative travel choice to the car for people's daily commute and other travel purposes. Buses and coaches provide a vital lifeline for individuals and communities, promoting social inclusion and access to education, healthcare, employment and social opportunities.

This opening statement is something all of us bussies already know – right? But what about the rest of Australia?

79% of Australian workers use the car for their journey to work. So, perhaps it is not such a far stretch to say that although more than half of Australia 'see' the buses on our roads, what do they really 'know' about the bus?

The full life cycle of a bus and its services are complex and requires a taskforce of more than 85,000 Australians. Our industry provides a huge range of jobs in communities across Australia including drivers, mechanics, engineers, skilled production workers and transport professionals in various specialised fields such as planning, social work and even psychology!

In terms of the bus industry's overall economic impact in Australia – well – that is a difficult figure to easily explain in this short column due to the direct and indirect benefits that we bussies provide. As the leading public transport sector keeping Australians *moving*, we are managers of congestion and facilitators of productivity in our cities and regions. If public transport was stopped overnight, our cities – the cities that generate 80% of the value of Australia's GDP - would grind to a halt.

If governments were to stop providing route and school services, an estimated 1 billion-plus passenger trips per year would transfer to an alternative travel mode – such as the car, which could add 1.4 million or more cars to our roads. The impact on congestion would be immense, as would the increase in greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants.

It is estimated that bus passengers get 41 minutes per day of incidental exercise. If they stopped catching the bus and drove instead this would decline to 8 minutes per day. The health implications for the nation are significant. Two-thirds of Australian adults are now overweight (35.6%) or obese (31.3%). Imagine how much this figure could rise with a reduction in incidental exercise.

If 10 per cent of people started using the bus instead of their car, there could be a reduction in health-related costs of air pollution of \$20 million a year and a reduction in greenhouse emissions of over 400,000 tonnes per year.

If our manufacturing and supply sector ceased building buses and supplying the parts and components, Australia's economy would stand to lose \$5 billion in one year alone; and a further \$1.5 billion in keeping the bus fit and operational.



VIEW FROM CANBERRA



It is this kind of information that our industry, our governments and Australian communities need to hear – and hear often.

The BIC has always approached our *moving people* vision to enhance the sustainability and liveability of Australia's cities and regions by using buses and coaches. This is one of the reasons behind our decision in mid-2018, to commission the Institute of Transport and Logistics Studies (University of Sydney) to compile a decade of national data on the bus fleet on our roads, the operators and their passengers. The collated data provides an important snapshot of our industry and our contribution to Australia's economy, social well-being, city liveability and the governments 'green' agenda.

The report will shortly land on the desks of parliamentarians, ministers, city lord mayors and bureaucrats. Readers can go to our new website movingpeople.com.au to download the report. We urge you to read the report and then circulate the report to your local council representative and parliamentary member.

One last note. We advised in September's column that the BIC has decided to postpone our planned National *Moving People* 2021 conference to next year. Mark the diaries – 13 to 16 November 2022 in Brisbane. The BIC will hold an industry summit on 1st and 2nd March 2022 in Canberra to discuss the zero-emission agenda of governments and practical transition approaches. The summit will also include an IR Seminar and Technical Seminar. Bookmark your browser with movingpeople.com.au to stay up to date with all coming attractions and stay informed on what is going on nationally with industry and the federal government.

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.

