

VIEW FROM CANBERRA

March 19

Do you ever think about why they pulled up the tram tracks in Sydney in the early 20's was it?

I reckon Sydney and NSW politicians saw the car and internal combustion engine as the way of the future and everyone would own and drive a car for transport. No need for trams, let's get these street cars off the road and let the real cars have some space.

They decided cars would be how people will travel in the future. The interesting thing about this decision is that it created the bus market, or should I say, created the opportunity for smart local entrepreneurs to start the "new-fangled" bus market to transport people without cars.

In Melbourne they kept the trams (street cars) but cars opened the market for bus services which emerged where trams did not operate. This might sound like a simplistic start to the bus and coach industry but that's it in a nutshell.

Yes, as time progressed the fare paying bus services driven by demand in a new car era saw governments become involved and establish pretty much what we see today. Bus and coach operators providing bus services under a contract that subsidises the passenger fare to provide people who don't have a car to use an affordable transport service. But at its heart today it has become more, hasn't it?

Today, state and territory governments subsidise passenger fares and invest in the public transport network to incentivise the use of public transport to encourage people to not drive their cars.

What a 180 degree turnaround from Henry Ford and the first mass produced car and today's transport network.

New mobility choices driven through technology and customer demand are no different today than back in Henry Ford's time, except now it is all about reducing the number of individual trips taken by car and new transport entrepreneurs are on the hunt to make a buck.

The policy focus of every Australian government today is about how to encourage the use of alternatives for the car. Mass transit has to be at the spine of future transport/mobility in our cities and major regional centres. The interesting stuff for smart transport entrepreneurs is the transport body that will surround this spine and how to get a piece of the action.

Your businesses today, like the early pioneers in the bus industry, face the same challenges. A market has emerged and your entrepreneurial ambition is being called to the forefront in this new era of transport and personal mobility. How it is funded, tendered, benchmarked is changing in front of your eyes and that is why this year's BIC Conference is so important and why the program is going to be focussed on future operational realities and ask questions like:

- "Bidding for work in a new mobility era"



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- “The social procurement model - what else do you need to do”
- “Next gen rostering and scheduling for next gen demands”.

How exciting is this! But you will need to be in Canberra November 17-20.

The BIC Federal Election Primer mentioned in the last month’s BIC column is now a 10 point plan (not a 6 point plan). Check it out on the OzeBus website, do your bit and mark your diary to attend the BIC National Conference that will ask the hard questions about future bus business and the opportunities that are ready to be taken.

Bus Australia Network

