

View from Canberra

June 2020

Future passenger transport and the long term focus

The BIC is seeking your support for a suite of bus infrastructure investment projects as part of government recovery plans post Covid-19. The way we see it, once things get back to 'normal', public transport will continue to be a vital part of the renewal and revitalisation of our cities and regions. Buses – the workhorse of the PT network will continue to be heavily relied upon as a transport and mobility option.

It is important in this context to recognise the Infrastructure Plan Priority List from Infrastructure Australia (February 2016) that included the "Network Optimisation Program - Roads" as a high priority initiative with a near term proposed timetable of 0-5 years.

The initiative involves a portfolio of works focussed on addressing congestion on urban road networks with comparatively high public transport and freight use. At the time of the report being released, the BIC believed and still sees this as an opportunity for all jurisdictions. An opportunity to identify and invest in bus priority, bus rapid transit 'lite' and bus rapid transit infrastructure in line with data and technology, to improve network operations and, in particular, integration of bus, rail and ferry services.

Future passenger transport is also a subject top of mind for all of us working in the transport sector. Australia's growing population, 36 million in the next 30 years is a big number and will require a long-term focus on land use, planning and integrated transport.

It hardly seems surprising that the recommendation coming out of the report on "Future Cities: Planning for our Growing Population" from Infrastructure Australia (February 2018), identified a need to increase investment in timetable-free mass public transport to reduce congestion and increase access between where people live and where they work.

The BIC has identified small to large scale bus infrastructure investment options that could form part of local, state and federal government road funding investment for now and the future.

Shovel ready to major bus/public transport infrastructure projects will not only support bus public transport but can be a key Covid-19 economic recovery and employment driver as well as serving the longer-term infrastructure challenges identified by Infrastructure Australia.

Five Key Projects for Road and Transport Infrastructure

1. Smart, Sheltered and Accessible bus stops

Short to medium term projects to have bus stops sheltered, meet accessible transport standards as per the compliance timeframe of the Disability Discrimination Act 2002, and provide 'smart' real-time information for passengers which will also make it attractive to advertisers thereby enabling recoup of some costs of the infrastructure spend.



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2. Integrated PT mode stations

Short to medium term projects to improve the integration of multimodal PT links and stations.

3. Bus layover and traffic light priority

Short to medium term bus layover lanes and bus priority on all major city bus trunk routes.

4. Bus priority lanes

Short to medium term build of bus priority lanes where practical and all major bus trunk routes including Item 3 (bus layover and bus priority) and at a minimum used during peak commute times.

5. Bus Rapid Transit and Bus Rapid Transit Lite

With the recent work undertaken by Infrastructure Australia in 2018, BRT and BRT 'lite' could be delivered as key major projects in most cities and regional centres. The delivery of light and heavy rail public transport characteristics in a rubber wheeled mode (where rail services are not currently provided) and dedicated right of way services, will provide significant benefits across the entire PT and road network for a fraction of the cost of rail.

The BIC has sent correspondence to all key transport, roads and infrastructure Ministers and Departments for their consideration of these 5 proposed road and transport infrastructure project options as outlined.

The BIC has also recommended the formation of a project committee with Industry and public transport and infrastructure authorities and agencies in the federal and each state and territory government. This committee would be charged with identifying projects in the 5 proposed categories.

I urge all bus operators to get on board with this initiative and make contact with your local and state representative to discuss what might be taken up in these 5 key areas in your local area(s) of operation. Please send an email to enquiries@bic.asn.au if you need any clarification or require assistance in presenting your case for bus infrastructure projects in your area.

Bus Australia Network

