

VIEW FROM CANBERRA

March 16

Promotion or Demotion – The Turnbull Ministry re-shuffle

Warren Truss is retiring and a new Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Darren Chester has been appointed. Before I provide an overview of what the Ministerial re-shuffle will mean to Industry a short thank you to Deputy PM Warren Truss, we might not have agreed on the role of the Federal Government in public transport and our cities but he always had an open door to discuss issues and concerns and attended many BIC events and meetings over the years.

Much commentary has been made about the Turnbull Ministry re-shuffle forced on him by retirees and resignations.

Darren Chester is the new Minister, so what does this mean for the bus industry. Is it a promotion for our issues or a demotion?

I say this is a promotion (definitely for him, straight into Cabinet) and will advance BIC policies with him as Minister. A young National Minister from Gippsland in Victoria, an up and comer, a well- respected and progressive thinker that falls into what I term the new breed of Nationals. He has participated in a number of BIC events since elected. Great call by the PM and Barnaby and all good for the bus and coach Industry.

Angus Taylor, Assistant Minister for Cities. Rhodes Scholar from my home town of Goulburn. Future leader some say.

Commentators say it is a demotion of the Cities portfolio and that Turnbull's focus on cities without a specific Minister appointed is diminished. Just an Assistant Minister. But. Who is Angus Taylor the Assistant Minister to? The Prime Minister no less. Turnbull is the Minister for Cities and what a talent he has selected to be Assistant Minister.

I say this is a promotion of the portfolio and its importance to the Prime Minister.

Criticism has been cast that Angus Taylor does not even live in a city, but I think he might just get it.

Rhodes Scholar, Oxford, London is a good start, a mere 2 hour drive to Sydney from home, he has been around and would suggest he might have a bit of experience and ideas about our future cities and growing regions. Let's not forget a city is defined as more than 100,000 population. We currently have 18 of them and there other growth areas that will pass this magic mark soon. It is not just about Capital Cities. Promotion I say.

Fiona Nash, New Deputy Leader of the Nationals and Minister for Regional Development. A city girl come farmer. Smart, sharp, super nice, fair and hard when she has to be.

Her appointment is a winner for regional Australia and regional bus operators. Promotion I say. If you want someone to understand the importance of transport and how we "move people" in regional areas then Fiona Nash's appointment is a winner.

And finally a word on Barnaby. You know something is different when the mention of a first name is an automatic recognition of who it is. Think of Elvis, Madonna, Barnaby.

He will be unique, effective and good for the country.

Interesting times and opportunities await the Industry. A Federal election is on the horizon and BIC is positioning itself with the new Ministry and each of the political parties to adopt policies and programs that will support the businesses that make up the Australian bus and coach Industry.