

# VIEW FROM CANBERRA



October 2016

## Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) for Better Cities 2016-17

The BIC initiated the Parliamentary Friendship Group for Better Cities in 2014. At that time we recruited 4 other likeminded organisations to join us, the Australasian Railways Association, Planning Institute of Australia, the Cyclists Promotion Fund and the Heart Foundation.

On October 12, 2016 we will hold our first PFG event since the Federal Election. This time we have 15 National Organisations as members. You can see the full membership and charter of the group on the OzeBus website: <http://ozebus.com.au/solutions-for-moving-people/better-cities-group>.

The PFG provides an opportunity on 4 or more occasions a year to present to interested Members and Senators of the Federal Parliament, of which there are many, on why our cities and growing regions are important.

The PFG is co-convened by a Member of the government, a Member of the opposition and a Member of the Greens.

The co-conveners cannot be Ministers or Shadow Ministers. Parliamentary Friendship Groups are about local issues that Members and Senators have a feeling for in their own electorate or in the state they represent.

The co-conveners for PFG for Better Cities include: Trent Zimmerman, Liberal Member for North Sydney (Joe Hockey's old seat), Andrew Giles ALP Member for Scullin (right in the centre of Dyson Group of Companies in Melbourne) and Adam Bandt, Greens Member for Melbourne (right in the centre of the city).

The fact that there is tri-partisan support for this Friendship Group highlights the importance that all of the major parties place on the future of our cities. And I have said this before, I do not just mean the capitals and major cities.

In Australia we have 20 locations defined as cities, i.e. cities with populations over 85,000, and McKay is poised to make it 21. So when you think about cities, think about Wagga, Ballarat, Townsville and surrounding areas as much as you think about Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Most Australians today (89%) live in what can be termed an urban environment. This is the scope of the Friendship Group discussions. How do we manage to move these people in the most efficient way in the future? What are the transport solutions for congestion? Where will all these people live as population increases? How do we pay for the Infrastructure of the future? What will transport look like in the future?

The BIC also has a focus on rural and remote passenger transport and I might touch on this more specifically in my next column as these areas and populations have many challenges as well. Most importantly, how these areas are linked to our cities is a key focus for the Friendship Group as well.

The Parliamentary Friendship Group for Better Cities attracts up to 80-90 interested Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, whenever we hold an event. This usually involves a discussion led by a key note speaker, questions and then informal discussions over a 2 hour period. You can view these presentations from the link above.

These are thought leading and thought provoking policy discussions at the highest level. The PFG events form an important part of the role BIC plays in the Canberra Parliament.



## VIEW FROM CANBERRA

It is a key plank in the Industry's strategic approach to influence the future direction and support of the federal government and promoting the bus and coach industry as part of the solution for the future of our nation.

These PFG events are supported by the research and policy papers that the BIC has developed over the last decade. This research and the BIC advocacy has been well received and recognised not just by the federal government, as important contributions to the national discussion, but also by state, territory and local governments.

Perhaps bus operators, manufacturers and suppliers might take the time to review some of the PFG events on the OzeBus website to see the types of things that go on behind the scenes to represent the interests and future of the Industry, your Industry.

Better still, it is never too late to register for the BIC Conference, so come along. Play your part and contribute to the future of your business and your industry.

No one is too big or too small to play their part. The important thing is playing a part.

See you in Perth.

### Bus Australia Network

