

VIEW FROM CANBERRA



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FUTURE TRANSPORT AND BUSES AGAIN .

You might remember that in my last column I mentioned that Industry met with the National Transport Commission (NTC) to discuss what the challenges might be for future public transport and what the opportunities are for Industry to be part of a changing passenger transport marketplace; a part of “MaaS” Mobility as a Service.

I have always thought that bus public transport was a service. A mass transit service and a social transit service funded by state and territory governments to deliver on a range of their own policy outcomes as a Government. It could be managing congestion or addressing social exclusion for transport disadvantaged people to name just two.

“Maas” is more than the traditional PT delivery paradigm. Maas put simply is where every kind of transport choice can be accessed on a single app to make travel seamless to suit an individual’s needs.

Uber and other providers have highlighted that there was a gap in the market in the context of the taxi industry. This business model shift has been driven by technology, not a transport provider but a business that connects the individual to the transport service they want.

So where do bus services fit in this future MaaS world?

I am not exactly sure where we fit as an Industry but we do have an idea of where we want to fit, which is a good start.

I wrote recently to all CEOs of transport agencies across Australia and to all Ministers and Shadow Ministers of Transport to articulate where we want to head as an Industry. Following is a summary of the content of that letter.

“A Future Transport workshop was held on 6 March 2017 with Bus Industry representatives from the operational and supply side of the Industry and the National Transport Commission

The workshop discussed future public transport and specifically bus services, and what the future challenges and opportunities might be for Industry in the context of:

- *future autonomous vehicles*
- *emerging on demand and ride sharing services*
- *new mobility technologies and services*
- *the role of mass and social transit in the future.*

The Bus Industry sees itself playing a leadership role in the delivery of efficient and effective transport services today, to meet the “moving people” challenges of our cities and regions, to deliver the policy outcomes of government and meet the mobility needs of the community and in the future to deliver “intelligent mobility”.

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The fast changing and some would say disruptive nature of new technologies to deliver more personalised mobility options for individuals has seen rapid change in the passenger transport sector already. The Bus Industry would like to take a lead in meeting the challenges of future public transport and developing a future passenger transport business model and regulatory framework.

The reality is, the building blocks for a new business model for passenger transport already exists.

Mobility as a Service (MaaS) already exists, for example, through smartphone technology, third party service providers and integrated ticketing across modes.

The Bus Industry Confederation (BIC) would like to see a passenger transport business model and regulatory framework developed that is common across states and territories. This is a unique opportunity to avoid the rail gauge outcome of 19th Century Australia. The last thing we need is 8 different approaches to future passenger mobility.

Bus has a role to play in the delivery of future mass and social transit services and can also have a role in delivering on demand, “last mile” and other ride sharing and emerging innovative and intelligent mobility services, if the opportunity is open to them.

Industry believes, that bus, can in fact, be the cornerstone of future passenger transport with its expertise, assets and understanding of the task. The bus industry working closely with governments would like to path the way to deliver fully integrated passenger mobility services for the future.”

So see you in Hobart November 12-15 at the BIC Conference, guess what the theme is “Moving People – Mobility as a Service”.

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