

BIC COLUMN - FEBRUARY 2013

Election Special

Prime Minister Julia Gillard has announced the 2013 Federal Election will be held on Saturday September 14.

No doubt the first question that springs to mind is WHO WILL WIN?

Unfortunately I can't tell you that. If I could predict election results nine months before voting day I would be sitting in a luxury yacht somewhere in the Caribbean, rather writing this column.

What I can tell you is what the election means for the bus industry and what it means for YOU.

The 2013 Federal Election is likely to be the most important for the Bus Industry Confederation's Moving People Agenda since it was first developed in 2001.

Very importantly for the BIC, there is an understanding from both sides that the Australian Government has a role to play in city planning and infrastructure.

History and statements from the Government and Opposition, however, tells us there are significant differences in how both parties intend to carry out this agenda.

We will learn more about the policies of all the parties contending for votes as the "longest election campaign in history" unfolds.

While the parties are yet to map out their specific campaigns the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition have made early indications of the directions they will take during the lead up to the election.

Tony Abbott has stated the Coalition will take a strong focus on economic management as the foundation of a strong nation, based on the principle that no reform or investment can take place without waste being eliminated from Government spending and the economy being in a strong position.

Importantly for the BIC's Moving People agenda the Coalition has made a commitment to retain Infrastructure Australia which is the Federal Government body that oversaw funding of public transport infrastructure and is developing a National Urban Transport Policy which will look at how we move people in our cities.

The Prime Minister has indicated that the Government will focus on its economic management credentials and will aim over the course of the year to set in train the National Disability Insurance Scheme and reforms to education funding.

In announcing the election date in a Press Club address the Prime Minister referred to the pressures created by travelling times in urban centres.

Our ideas and policies are on the radar. The Government and the Opposition know there is a role for a Federal Government to play in urban transport and city planning.

The next nine months will be a great opportunity to make sure we keep our Moving People agenda at front of mind ahead of announcements and spending commitments being made.

We need to make sure that this doesn't fall down the list of priorities or that our voices aren't drowned out by those who cry more often and louder than us.

This is where YOU come into it as a representative of the industry.

The BIC is developing an analysis of key seats and a strategy for highlighting bus industry and Moving People issues to candidates running in the election.

We will distribute this to the industry and we need your support in getting in touch with candidates and lobbying for outcomes for public transport and buses.

Watch this space.