

## **BIC Column – July 2013**

### **The Queen is Dead Long Live the King**

I get a real sense of déjà vu writing this column. Not more than three years and a few days ago I was telling the industry about Kevin Rudd being deposed as Prime Minister and replaced by Julia Gillard after a “bloodless” coup in Canberra.

I will leave value judgments about the latest and distinctly bloodier coup to replace Julia Gillard as Prime Minister with Kevin Rudd to you as the reader.

There is a genuine concern amongst observers that the same problems that attended replacing an elected Prime Minister with someone appointed from within the Parliamentary Labor party in 2010 could plague Kevin Rudd in his second go around.

If the Government doesn't get past this, we could end up in the same spiral of intrigue and paralysis that has marked the last few months. This is a wait and see proposition.

The Coalition released a series of ads almost immediately after Kevin Rudd won the caucus ballot by 57 votes to 45 to be elected as leader of the Federal Parliamentary Labor Party, which has since resulted in him being appointed the Prime Minister by the Governor General. This messaging about a divided Labor Party is expected to feature prominently in the election campaign.

The impact of all of these factors in play is yet to be determined and makes for some interesting weeks ahead as we draw closer to the election. Early polling suggests that installing Kevin Rudd as PM has produced an immediate improvement in Labor's primary vote and two party preferred figures.

Pundits are citing this as a “bounce” which may or may not be maintained depending on how the Government handles circumstances in the next few weeks.

There is a lot of uncertainty and speculation floating around Canberra at the moment, one thing that is certain, is that the events of this week are positive for the bus industry.

Long time supporter of our industry and the BIC's Moving People agenda, Anthony Albanese, the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, has been made Deputy Prime Minister, has retained his Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Development portfolios, and his role as Leader of the House.

That's a lot of responsibility for one Minister, but he has shown in the past that he is capable of handling it and producing great outcomes across the policy areas in the infrastructure and transport portfolio. The current Government has invested more in public transport than all of governments since Federation put together and are taking the front foot on addressing land use and transport issues in our major cities and regional centres.

The leadership changes in the Labor Government will make this election more contestable and this will bring many issues back on to the election campaign platforms of the major parties. The BIC is lobbying to make sure that public transport and how we move people in our cities and regions features in the policies and platforms of the major parties.

One of the key asks from the BIC in our lobbying during this election campaign is the establishment of a Cities portfolio within the major parties to deal specifically with intersecting issues in our major cities including transport, land use management and strategic planning.

This latest turn of events in Canberra should make this more likely.