

## **BIC Column – July 2013**

### **Moving People is About a Productive and Healthy Australia**

Let me take you back 60 years in time to London. You're on an iconic red double decker bus and the conductor asks you for your ticket.

What you don't know about this conductor is that he is half as likely to die of a heart attack as the driver of the bus.

Why? Because the conductor walks up and down the stairs of the bus while the driver sits still all day.

This week is the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Busman's Survey undertaken by British scientist Jerry Morris. His findings highlight the importance of physical activity to health and fitness.

In the same vein research shows that using public transport increases physical activity and can help people meet their daily requirements for exercise. The Bus Association of Victoria recently showed that people who used public transport undertook FIVE TIMES more physical activity than commuters who drive; 41 minutes a day compared to 8 minutes a day.

People who used public transport, because they walked or cycled to catch the bus or train met their daily requirements for physical activity while people who drove would have to make additional time to get the exercise they needed.

This coincides with the release of Australian Bureau of Statistics data this week that showed only 43 per cent of Australian adults meet their daily recommended levels of physical activity and that 72 per cent of Australians still rely on the car as a their primary form of transport.

Physical activity and how it relates to transport is a big challenge for the government and the BIC has contributed to the discussion with our Moving People policies.

The BIC has lobbied for providing Australians with a range of good travel choices, because "Moving People" in our cities and regions is a key solution for better productivity, a cleaner environment and a healthy population.

With the Federal election looming into view, this message is all the more important as we try to build acceptance from all the major parties for this thinking.

To this end it was great to see a significant policy announcement from Shadow Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, the Hon Warren Truss this week.

A Coalition Government if elected would task Infrastructure Australia with undertaking a new, evidence-based audit of our infrastructure asset base, to be run in collaboration with the states and territories, which will help inform the 15-year pipeline.

This reform to Infrastructure Australia is significant for the BIC's Moving People policies because it sees the Coalition heading in the right direction in terms of looking at infrastructure investment options and using the language we have been using since we were established in Canberra. These are encouraging signs from the Coalition.

Earlier this month we also saw Minister for Infrastructure and Transport show resounding support for the Federal Government taking a role in public transport. In a Lateline interview the Minister related the Federal Government's investment in public transport directly to the problem of urban congestion in our cities and putting it up as a key election issue.

This is a major point of differentiation between the major parties as things stand and the BIC will be lobbying the Coalition to get them over the line in recognising the link between reducing congestion and investing in public transport infrastructure, especially bus priority infrastructure.

The Minister's interview is up on the BIC's Ozebus Youtube site which contains promotional material for the industry and BIC Members. Go to <http://www.youtube.com/user/OzeBusandCoach?feature=watch>.