



Annual Report

to 30 June 2020



President's report

We remain committed to advocating for the opening up of tourism markets, understanding that we can operate safely for our customers whilst providing products and services that they need.

The 2019/20 year has been one of evolution for Bus SA, with an eye to the future of the Association as well as building depth for current challenges. Of course the biggest challenge for this financial year was a pandemic that stung all of us from March 2020.

I am pleased that as an Association we were able to advocate into Ministers' offices on behalf of our Members and achieve some helpful outcomes to support most of you through the early days of this crisis. We were in contact with the Minister for Planning, Transport and Infrastructure and the Treasurer on a regular basis, whilst gathering information about the daily changes in our businesses.

I acknowledge that some of us have suffered more than others as a result of COVID-19, especially those operators with a strong tourism link. We remain committed to advocating for the opening up of tourism markets, understanding that we can operate safely for our customers whilst providing products and services that they need.

On behalf of operators locally I also acknowledge the work of the BIC and APTIA in representing our situation to the Federal Government. I am sure that many of us would not have survived this economic downturn without the support that JobKeeper has provided in conjunction with other initiatives.

On a political front, policy work effectively stopped for over a quarter of the year. We anticipate that it will restart during 2021, as the Government and Opposition look towards the 2022 state election. We will continue to update you on our views about how we can build a sustainable industry along with appropriate policy and regulatory settings.

Early in the financial year we re-structured our executive roles. Lauran Huefner, Executive Director since 2013, stepped back to a one day per week role representing Bus SA in our dealings with government, and agreed to join the Board.

From August 2019, Andrea Overall joined Bus SA as Executive Officer. Andrea has a strong background in communications and publishing, with extensive experience in the education and environment sectors. You will have seen her influence on our website and other activities already.

I thank you for your membership, the Board for their time, and in particular Chris Cudsi of 13CABS for joining the Board of Bus SA. We look forward to the coming year, and to finding new ways to support the bus sector and the mobility task in SA.

Ben Romanowski, July 2020

Board

- President - Ben Romanowski (29 November 2016 – present)
- Vice President - Dean McGinty (29 November 2016 – present)

Board members

- Ashley Barnes
- Jared Kent
- Stephen Lucas
- Dean McGinty
- Ben Romanowski
- Chris Cudsi (from 29 November 2019)
- Lauran Huefner (from 8 July 2019)

Executive Director

- Lauran Huefner (04 October 2013 – 07 July 2019)

Executive Officer

- Andrea Overall (15 August 2019 – present)

SA councillor to BIC and APTIA*

- Ben Romanowski (30 November 2016 – present)

Auditor

- Moore Stephens (formerly Hayes Knight)
- From 2019/20, AccruHarris Orchard

*BIC - Bus Industry Confederation. APTIA - Australian Passenger Transport Industrial Association.



Director, Government Relations report

The 2019-20 year was an interesting one for the State Government, with buses and contracting of public transport a key challenge. Add in the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to respond quickly, and you have the ingredients for a rather different year.

Adelaide Metro changes

The big-ticket item for the State Government was always going to be the tendering of the Adelaide Metro network. This was an interesting piece of work as the tenders called for operators to tender on the existing network but also provide government with a comprehensive plan for improving the network within contract areas.

In all, several contract regions changed hands, with Busways added to the existing operators, Keolis Downer and Sealink (who merged/ took over Torrens Transit).

The plans provided to government via the tender process formed the basis for a revised Adelaide Metro network plan, where express trunk routes were to be serviced by fewer branch lines. This is a model that Bus SA had advocated for some years.

The changes made a lot of bus stops obsolete, and unfortunately from our perspective the Opposition was successful in creating an appetite of fear that eventually resulted in the proposed changes being dropped. In essence, Adelaide is stuck with a 1970s bus network for another generation unless a government of the day can find a way around this.

From the Bus SA perspective, the Government was let down by poor advice relating to the launch plan. It was always unlikely that rolling the change out across Adelaide in one go would be a successful strategy. We advocate for greater collaboration between industry, government and the community in any attempts to advance the network.

The Government has also had to manage severe criticism around privatising the management of the tram network and the trains. The latter was to be awarded in the 2021 financial year. The former was introduced in 2020, and is running successfully, however the Labor

party has taken the position that they will reverse such contracts if they are elected in 2022.

School bus

The school bus review of early 2019 is still to deliver its report, it is apparently being considered by Cabinet. It is our view that the Government has “clicked” to the financial difficulty they face in looking to privatise the yellow fleet. I would expect to hear no positive news in this regard, especially given the budgetary challenges brought about by COVID-19.

How they attempt to deal with better services across regional schools is anyone’s guess. We will continue to advocate for the

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fleet to be managed privately, and for a strong regional network to support communities.

COVID-19

Overall, government responded very well to the great challenge of COVID-19. Most Bus SA Members have qualified for JobKeeper, government contracts continue to be paid, and other concessions – such as payroll tax relief and deferred interest payments – have helped most Members hold station during the pandemic.

I must acknowledge the Minister for Planning, Transport and Infrastructure, Stephan Knoll; the Treasurer, Rob Lucas; and the Education Minister, John Gardner, who (along with their offices) made quick and helpful decisions in finding ways to continue support for operators.

The sector that remains in trouble is the tour and coach sector. Many of these operators shut their businesses and remain shut at the end of this financial year. There is a great opportunity heading into the 2021 financial year for government to continue to find ways to stimulate the tourism economy, including a mature approach to land tourism activities. We will continue to discuss those positions on your behalf.

Lauran Huefner, July 2020



Executive Officer's report

Since joining Bus SA in August 2019, I have focussed on connecting with Members, and strengthening and modernising the organisation's communications methodology and activities.

Bus SA website

The ability to get information out to Members in a quick and responsive manner was limited, so in early 2020 a complete overhaul of the Bus SA website began. Site content was edited, and a completely new infrastructure and design was put in place. The new Bus SA website was launched in April. It is simple and clean, easy to administer, and features new functions such as a News blog and online Member Alerts.

The website also has a section on COVID information tailored to the bus and coach industry.

Member Alert 'campaigns' perform better than peer campaigns worldwide in the 'Travel and Transportation' category.

The May and June Member Alerts represent the biggest spike in usage on the Bus SA website during the (available) reporting period.

Bus SA Events

In previous years, the Bus SA conference has been held in May. Our initial 2020 plan was to move away from the conference model and towards networking dinners that gather us all together – politicians, partners and operators – for constructive, educational discussion. Due to COVID-19 we were obliged to place this on hold, with a view to revisiting later in 2020.

We have a strong focus on ensuring that state and federal government understands and supports the essential nature of our industry, and the unique business issues we face.

Our challenge, as ever, remains finding ways to be relevant to operators and suppliers. We will continue to try new ways to engage over 2020.

As the old website did not have any analytics running it is not possible to gauge previous usage, but following are some statistics from **01 May to 30 June 2020**:

- Total users - 630
- Page views - 1,531

Top 5 most viewed pages

1. Home page - 866
2. June Member Alert - 103
3. Who we are - 48
4. COVID-19 resources - 40
5. News and Events - 38

Member Alerts

With the new online format for Member Alerts, we can include more newsworthy information of interest to Members in each issue. This has included general and specific industry trends; Bus SA news; Member profiles, and health, safety and wellness information – particularly around COVID-19.

We use Mail Chimp – a global online marketing campaign platform – to send out Member Alert notifications. Statistically, Bus SA

COVID challenges

With the advent of COVID-19 many of our plans for the year were thrown into disarray, as were those of all around us. As agreed by the Board, my priority was to contact all Members at the start of the crisis to offer our support.

The first few months of the pandemic saw a flurry of Bus SA activity with the creation of an industry tailored COVID section on the new website, and several COVID-related Member Alerts advising on important issues and initiatives such as government spending and health and safety.

Membership and partnerships

There were few membership changes during 2019-20, although we have been able to build a strong suite of supplier partnerships. At the end of the year we held 3 gold, 5 silver and 9 bronze partners.

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Bus Vic Expo

The Bus Vic Expo and Maintenance Conference was held in early October 2019 and provided a fascinating insight into the public transportation industry. I met many people and made some excellent, supportive contacts. Bus SA was responsible for social media promotion for the conference and ran several successful Facebook advertising campaigns in the lead up.

We also Tweeted and uploaded Facebook posts via the Bus Vic accounts during the event.



BIC Conference

The annual BIC Conference was held on 17-20 November in Canberra, and it was a fascinating insight into 'moving people' in the 21st century. Sessions on youth, sustainable transportation and on-demand PT offered a great deal of food for thought. Other sessions focussed on current trends in procurement, future bus services and regional mobility. These sessions provided a rich source of themes and information to provide to our Members.

Again, Bus SA was responsible for the social media effort, Tweeting and Facebooking from the Ozebus, Bus SA and Bus Vic accounts during the event.

Michele Pole from Spencer Gulf Coaches won the 2019 SURA Bus SA Achiever Award, putting her in the running for the year's national award. Michele travelled to Canberra for the BIC Conference, where she was up against some stiff competition on the day. The national award ended up going to Robert Wright from Moreland Bus Lines in Victoria, a well-deserved win to a great operator.

Rumour has it, Michele was secretly relieved she didn't take the win. Ever the quiet achiever, getting up to say a few words in front of several hundred people is her idea of punishment rather than a reward.

Andrea Overall, July 2020





Bus SA's 2025 Agenda

The Bus SA 2025 Agenda articulates specific policy positions that – we believe – members of parliament should take to improve the day-to-day lives of South Australians over the next five years. It sets out practical and achievable actions for the development and improvement of public transportation, that support existing government goals.

We believe our 2025 Agenda proposes great opportunities for all politicians, regardless of political persuasion.

We can, and must, do better. Through our work we aim to show parliament solutions to regional and metropolitan mobility, safety and procedural problems. Our proposals tackle structural, economic, social and productivity issues. They address the inherent challenges in delivering improved mobility for all South Australians. They are divided into 3 streams: Regional, City, Standards and safety.

Regional

Investment in a regional mobility network

Regional residents have poor service access. We can and should do better. Our 2016 research showed regional South Australians have limited options when travelling between regions or within their own region.

By benchmarking the investment made in other states, we conclude that \$70 per regional resident is an achievable target for SA. This investment should focus on network development and integration to provide services for a decent span of hours at a reasonable frequency.

Regional Accessibility Committees (RACs) across the state

Our 2016 research also found there is a need to coordinate mobility access for people in regional towns by providing practical ground level support.

We recommend a mobility solution for locals by locals, integrating all transport modes for travellers within specific geographic areas. RACs are cheap and efficient ways to help people move around.

Privatise Department for Education (DE) yellow fleet

The current yellow fleet is and run by time-poor school principals and managers. The increased burden of the 2018 Chain of Responsibility (CoR) obligations make managing a school bus run even more onerous. Using skills and expertise available in the private sector to deliver professional school bus services would be of considerable benefit for Government and communities alike.

It is our view that the cost of complying with CoR laws would be much higher than engaging the private sector to either manage the existing fleet or deliver services outright.

Allow children inside 5km zone to travel on school buses

We believe that school transport policy should allow children within the 5km zone to travel on school buses. This should be cost neutral – making use of existing vacant/unused seats.

The School Card could be used as the determinant of who can travel inside the zone. There is no need for school buses to travel with empty seats – they should be used as a community resource.



City

Network optimisation plan

We support the development of a clearly identifiable public transport interchange in the heart of the city, including:

- Develop Currie and Grenfell streets (between Hindmarsh and Light squares) as a bus transit street.
- Redesign King William Street between Victoria Square and North Terrace to prioritise trams and buses.
- Improve pedestrian connections to and within the interchange.

First and last mile

The first and last mile problem is a tough one to resolve. Solving it could boost bus usage and improve community access.

A **bikes on buses** trial would allow Adelaide Metro buses to better integrate with other public transport modes (such as trains).

An **on-demand** trial for morning and afternoon peak services could provide door-to-door connectivity to the existing trunk networks. Options could include small buses in specific suburbs bringing patrons to and from super stops or train stations. This has been trialled successfully overseas.

Standards and safety

Establish Minister's Passenger Transport Forum

There is no forum for those in the business of moving people to directly and regularly engage with their Minister. We propose an annual forum that brings together taxi, chauffeured vehicle, community transport and bus organisations to raise specific issues.

Bus SA is willing to convene and administer this activity in collaboration with the government sector.

Operator accreditation regime

We promote operator accreditation in the form of a safety management system that covers business operation, vehicle maintenance and driver management.

Bus SA has long advocated for the establishment of an operator accreditation regime that sets minimum standards for bus operators, whether they are government contractors, private operators or in the community sector. It is our view that all bus passengers should expect the same level of safe operation, regardless of how their ride is funded.

With the current Chain of Responsibility Laws in place, an operator accreditation regime is of greater importance than ever before.

With changes to the regulatory environment this program could be at minimal cost to government. Our industry has the expertise to lead the process and administer the regime.

Privatise bus inspections

Government has privatised heavy vehicle inspections, but the scheme excludes buses.

Bus SA calls for the opportunity to offer private bus inspections through a road safety inspection scheme along the same lines as the existing system in Victoria.

Again, our industry has the expertise to lead the process and administer the regime. It would lift standards and support our views on operator accreditation at no direct cost to government.

Bus Safety Week

A Bus Safety Week initiative would promote the good safety record of the bus industry and at the same time promote the 'shared responsibility' of bus safety. The initiative would focus on:

- shared roads (giving way to buses, school bus stop safety)
- the differences between accredited and registered operators
- correct safety behaviours on and around buses (respect for staff, wearing seat belts, the ramifications of anti-social behaviour).

Bus Safety Week could also be the flagship for a further program of school safety seminars whereby every public school could access an education program for students. This could occur every 2 -3 years. We believe would be a very worthwhile government investment.

Bus SA partners 2019-20

Gold partners



Bronze partners

