

Annual Report

to 30 June 2022





President's report

Stephen Lucas, July 2022

There is increased discussion at the national level about Zero Emission Bus. Bus SA will work with the Bus Industry Confederation to source and distribute key information about future energy options as the industry navigates this complex problem.

The big story of 2022 is that we are mostly all still here and operating services, despite the uncertainty that has hung over our industry for the term of the pandemic. Just as all things seemed more settled towards the end of 2021, the flurry of concern about Omicron in January 2022 seemed, by the end of the 2022 financial year, to have been rather heavy-handed.

Nevertheless, Bus SA has kept things going. In the lead up to the 2022 State Election, Bus SA commissioned a report into regional spend per head on public transport, comparing South Australia to every other State and Territory in the Federation. Why is this important?

The main answer is simple – because it hasn't been done before and we have only anecdotally known that South Australia under-invests.

Furthermore, it gives our regional MPs some material to argue over in their party rooms, some solid figures with which they can argue for an improvement in equity.

We now know that our call to increase spending to around \$80 per head in regional South Australia will still leave us around the bottom of the table – but at least level pegging with other jurisdictions.

BusSAfe, announced last year, finally got off the ground in Term 2, 2022. Early indications are that it will be well received by schools. It is an excellent example of an industry-led education initiative that will save lives. We are delighted that there appears to be bipartisan support for the program, which aims to deliver 100 sessions a year through to the end of 2024.

At a national level, key discussions have been held around the review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport. The Bus Industry Confederation has made significant contributions to the review process, including towards the exemption of school bus services from the Standards. This complex work will conclude in the 2023 year, and we remain hopeful of the right outcomes.

There has also been increased discussion at the national level about Zero Emission Bus, and Bus SA will work with the Bus Industry Confederation on sourcing and distributing key information about future energy options as the industry navigates this complex problem. Keep an eye out during the coming year for opportunities to hear about how these discussions are progressing.

Finally, I'd like to thank Members and the Board for their ongoing commitment to Bus SA. We greatly appreciate your investment and look forward to the coming years with optimism that the sector can contribute increasingly to the South Australian economy.

Bus SA Board

- Stephen Lucas - President (24 November 2021 – present)
- Jared Kent - Vice President (24 November 2021 – present)
- Ann McGregor
- Ben Romanowski (to 4 September 2021)
- Cathy Allen
- Dean McGinty (to 16 May 2022)
- Jason Hanley
- Luran Huefner



Director, Government Relations report

Lauran Huefner, July 2022

Although an election victory by the ALP was expected, it was the nature of the win that was perhaps the political surprise of the 2022 election. Weeks out from the election, a hung parliament was considered the likely outcome.

As we all now know, the Malinauskas Government gained an outright majority, in a parliament with several blue-ribbon seats held by independents. Most significantly, Geoff Brock won the seat of Stuart from the Deputy Premier; Dan Cregan remains a thorn in the side of the Liberals by holding Kavel

head on regional mobility across jurisdictions. As we might expect, South Australia lagged significantly behind the other states, almost half of the spend in Tasmania (\$40 v \$74), and significantly less than Victoria (\$40 v \$692). The point of this report is to help Government understand the systemic failure in this State to support our regions through provision of mobility options that are fairly priced, have a good span of hours (not just business hours), and run regularly.

The regional contracts go to tender in the 2023 year, with little scope for innovation and change, although there

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in the Adelaide Hills; and Troy Bell continues to hold back the courts and hold the seat of Mt Gambier. Dan Cregan, unsurprisingly, was returned to the Speaker's Chair of the House of Assembly.

All of this has resulted in Tom Koutsantonis taking on the Infrastructure and Transport portfolio, with Blair Boyer – former Chief of Staff to Minister Jennifer Rankine – taking up the Education portfolio. Vincent Tarzia and John Gardner hold the respective shadow portfolios.

The promise made by Peter Malinauskas in his victory speech – essentially to create fair opportunity for all South Australians – needs to be regularly raised with him and his Ministers as we continue to advocate for fair and reasonable funding for regional mobility.

Prior to the election, Bus SA released an important report by the Institute for Transport and Logistics Studies at the University of Sydney. This report compared spending per

appears to be a small amount of increased funding in the system. We mustn't see that as an indication that larger change cannot happen.

As foreshadowed last year, BusSAfe was launched in Term 2, 2022, delayed by the flurry of Omicron concerns that struck in the early part of the calendar year. See pages 4-5 for more about the program but suffice to say, after a change in Government, the Department for Education remains committed to the program. Good policy with good effect, it would appear.

Many of the challenges looking forward remain the same – finding ways to increase regional mobility options and funding, improving safety across all bus operations, and encouraging dialogue that shows the capability of the bus sector to help the State economy grow. And just entering the planning horizon is the prospect of school bus contract renewals. There is much to look forward to in 2023.

Director, Government Relations

- Lauran Huefner (24 November 2020 - present)

Executive Officer

- Andrea Overall (15 August 2019 – present)

SA councillor to BIC and APTIA*

- Steven Lucas (1 July 2020 – present)

Auditor

- AccruHarris Orchard

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

BusSAfe

Take care. Stay aware.

BusSAfe is a safety initiative, funded by the Department for Education, offered free to all rural and regional public primary schools in South Australia. It is currently funded for three years, to the end of 2024.

There are 23,000+ regional and rural students who take a bus to and from school. Over many years and successive governments, Bus SA has advocated for a safety initiative for these students.

They often miss out on metropolitan safety programs, so they don't learn about the importance and impact of their own behaviour when it comes to their safety around buses.



After more than 12 months preparation, BusSAfe kicked off in Term 2, 2022, with three Presenters around the State. A session takes 50 minutes, with the ideal group size being two classes, or around 40 children. In the first 20-30 minutes students watch short videos, the Presenter talks, and they engage in some role play and interaction. Afterwards, everyone goes outside to inspect a bus and learn about its safety and emergency features.

Developing BusSAfe was not unlike creating a small business, with processes, administrative functions and a feedback system devised to ensure a robust and functional program.

The Bus SA agreement with Education includes reporting requirements and KPIS around numbers of students and sessions, therefore the program must be consistent - with Presenters delivering the same messages in the same part of every session. Several main 'key' messages (see top of next page) are repeated in a variety of ways to help students retain them.



Operator involvement

Once a school is booked, an operator (usually one who services the school) is asked to provide a bus and often a driver too. So far, only one operator has said no - because all their buses were booked that day. In some cases, operators have provided several buses and drivers. We also work with school bus coordinators to use yellow buses wherever possible.

Thus far, not one operator or school has asked for money for their bus, or for driver wages. They have immediately recognised the importance of this initiative and they want to be involved.

An ongoing success

BusSAfe was originally intended for students in Reception to Year 4, but schools are asking to involve their Year 5-6 students as well. Given many in this cohort will be getting on the bus when they go into high school, it's a timely reminder for them to take care and be conscious of their behaviour around buses.

BusSAfe is booking sessions into Term 3, 2022, with over 15 schools either confirmed or interested so far. Also in the works is a Years 7-9 component of the program.

Elephants are a unit of measurement!

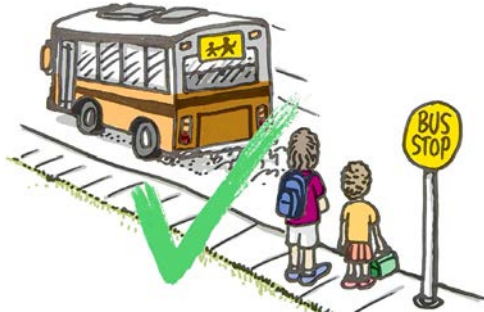
We teach students that a fully laden bus weighs fifteen tonnes. But fifteen tonnes means nothing to most of them.

So we explain how much a fifteen tonne bus weighs in **elephants**... It's three large male elephants with big tusks.

Also, we discovered that children only start learning about metres when they get to Years 3 or 4. So to teach "stand back 2 metres at the bus stop" we tell them that 2 metres is **two big adult steps**.

The main BusSafe messages...

- Stand well back (2 metres) at the bus stop or pickup area
- Don't rush or push others when the bus arrives
- Don't distract the driver, damage the bus, or annoy others on the bus
- Wait until bus moves away before crossing the road



- Don't **ever** cross the road in front of a bus or between parked cars
- Sit down on your seat and put your seatbelt on
- If you're in a town or city bus and there are no seats, move to the back of the bus
- Take your headphones off and put your phone away before leaving the bus



Executive Officer's report

Andrea Overall, July 2022

After a quiet year on the gathering together front, it was refreshing to be able to catch up with colleagues at the National Bus Industry Summit held in late June 2022.

On day one, speakers discussed three important areas currently impacting the entire operational and supply chain of the bus industry in Australia: accessible transport; heavy vehicle law; and zero emission technology and transition. On day two, seminars and workshops were held in industrial relations for operators, and technical issues (current and emerging) for suppliers.

Bus SA website

The Bus SA website was hit with two DDoS (denial of service) attacks this year, one in July 2021 and one in April 2022. Although website usage statistics for the year are inflated by these attacks, we know the exact date and time of the DDoS attacks and can still separate out meaningful statistics. Member Alerts continue to be the primary tool driving users to the website, and this year we published thirteen.

Overarching use of the website is as follows:

- Total Member Alert opens – 322
- Total users of the website – 2,260
- Website pages viewed – 4,534

Membership and partnerships

During 2021-2022, the Bus SA membership shrunk by three. We were deeply sad to see these valued members leave us for their different reasons, although their loss is in line with the current culture of acquisition and dwindling operator numbers in the State.

Partnership remained relatively stable, with two gold, two silver and six bronze partnerships. As we come out of the pandemic, we anticipate that partnerships will rise again, we are already seeing increased interest in supplier support.

Bus SA Events

With the pandemic it has been a couple of years between Bus SA conferences, with a decision made to hold off this year as well.

There is, however, a one-day Conference to look forward to in May 2023, plus a series of Webinars to run throughout 2023. Planning for these has already begun.

The Webinars will be open to all operators and industry-associated business in South Australia, they will be free to members and offered to non-members for a fee. We hope that these initiatives will engage the industry sufficiently to raise interest levels.

Our challenge, as ever, remains finding ways to be relevant to operators and suppliers. We maintain 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.

Bus SA's 2025 Policy 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.

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.

Our policy is 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 2021 research shows a very poor regional spend of \$40 per head on regional mobility. 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 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 yellow fleet

The current yellow fleet is run by time-poor school principals and school bus coordinators. The increased burden of the 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 remains 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. 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

BusSAfe, our Department for Education-funded bus program for regional and rural school children, is a very welcome safety initiative. A further 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. Ideally, such an initiative would amalgamate existing BusSAfe education with a focus on driver behaviour and public transportation, such as:

- 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 SA partners 2020-21

Gold partners



S U R A AUSTRALIAN
BUS AND COACH

Silver partners



Bronze partners

