

# Bus Industry Confederation of Australia



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## **Productivity Commission - Airport Regulation Inquiry, April 2011**

The Bus Industry Confederation (BIC) is the national organisation representing the interests of the Bus and Coach Industry, both operators and suppliers.

The BIC promotes the safety, efficiency, effectiveness, accessibility and increased use of bus and coach transport in Australia.

The BIC promotes the increased use of public transport in order to reduce the economic, social, environmental and public health impacts associated with the excessive use of cars.

The Australian bus and coach industry carries more than 1.5 billion passengers annually and employs more than 40,000 people.

As the primary voice of the bus and coach industry in Australia the BIC works with all levels of Government, regulatory authorities, the industry and the community to:

- Advocate for the virtues of the “National Moving People” strategy
- Encourage investment in public transport infrastructure and services
- Implement an effective tax and pricing regime for the industry and passengers
- Coordinate and make more effective existing Federal, State and Local Government policies and programs that relate to passenger transport
- Improve public understanding of the contribution made by the bus and coach industry to Australia’s economy, society and environment.
- Ensure that the accessibility and mobility needs of Australians are met, regardless of where they live or their circumstances.
- Ensure that buses and coaches operate safely and effectively
- Improve the environment and community health through greater use of public transport

The BIC have summarised responses from Bus Association Victoria and Bus NSW relating to land transport facilities providing access to Australian airports.

The summary focuses on the current status of bus infrastructure and services for airports and suggested solutions.

The improvement of travel options between airports and land-based travel facilities is in need of urgent attention.

Rail links to the airport in Sydney and Brisbane prove the popularity of these measures, but across the board coach and rail facilities and access to airports are second class. The cab-congested airports we have in most capital cities are not good enough.

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BIC strongly recommend that a greater level of transparency and accountability is required for the provision of airport transport infrastructure and services in Australian airports.

### **Melbourne Airport**

Although passenger movement have increased from 14.2m in 1997 to approximately 29m in 2009 landside facilities including bus parking and access infrastructure (other than Skybus) have not been developed commensurate with the growing demand and passenger movement.

The public interest is to have good mass transit services to the airport to reduce congestion on the road network (along with all the other positives of mass transit but congestion is probably the highest), and mass transit (including chartered coaches) are not getting a very good deal at the airport.

Subsidised public transport is getting the worst deal of all (ie 478/479/500/901). These bus stops are currently well outside of the immediate terminal area. This is particularly bad for airport workers who have to travel every day. We also understand Melbourne Airport want to charge the DOT per passenger who uses the Melbourne Airport public transport stop. This situation is unacceptable for the provision of a good mass transit service.

Car parking fees are currently not regulated but are monitored by government. Fees and conditions for private and public bus/coach services to airports are not regulated, nor monitored. This allows airports to use their monopoly position to reduce the competitiveness of bus/coach services, and hence increase the competitiveness of car parking (without reducing car parking prices). It's a real issue, and the Productivity Commission must address it.

It appears Melbourne Airport is able to set unregulated fees and awkward conditions for mass transit operators, to the benefit of their unregulated car parking revenue.

### **1) Coach access and facilities/service provision for coach operators and drivers for example,**

#### **Melbourne Airport**

**Issue:** - From January 2010, the coach driver has not been not permitted to leave coach to collect their group from the arrivals terminal. This is not a directive from Federal Police and this over regulation has impacted on service provision for passengers arriving at the airport.

**Recommended solution:** - Allow coach driver to meet group or establish group tour desk to meet and direct passengers to coach, the requirement to be an accredited operator will also mitigate the perceived security risk for the airport.

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**Issue:** - There is no requirement for buses which gain access to the airport to provide transport services to be an accredited operator under the Bus Safety Act (2009). This omission presents potential safety issues for passenger carriage and may also lead to occurrences of touting for work.

**Recommended solution:** All buses that enter the airport should be operated by operators accredited under the BSA (2009) or relevant regime in other states.

**Issue:** - There is significant traffic conflict in the arrivals forecourt as coaches are fighting for parking space with public cars in arrivals forecourt.

**Recommended Solution:** - Do not allow private cars in the arrivals forecourt or more strictly police current arrangements.

**Issue:** - No provision for purchase of casual parking ticket in airport forecourt or online and casual ticket holders only being able to park past terminal 1, over 600m from terminal 3.

**Recommended solution:** – Install casual parking machines in arrivals forecourt or make available online and allow casual users to park in same place as account holders.

**- Please see attached map detailing access for coaches at arrival and departure terminals**

## 2) Coach access and facilities/service provision passengers

### Melbourne Airport

**Issue:** - As the driver is not able to leave the coach to meet the newly arrived group, groups have constant difficulty in locating their bus, leading to poor service and safety concerns for passengers especially those with English as second language.

**Recommended solution:** - Allow coach driver to meet group or establish group tour desk to meet and direct passengers to their coach

## 3) Cost of access and onerous requirements for establishing an account/agreement with the airport for example

### Melbourne Airport

#### **Current service/issues:**

- Cost per van up to 10 seats (casual rate \$7.50 and agreement rate \$4)
- Cost per van 11 seats to 24 seats (casual rate \$7.50 and agreement rate \$6)
- Cost per coach greater than 24 seats (casual \$15.00 and agreement rate \$12)

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- Other onerous requirements eg \$1000 deposit required to establish account and payment required month in advance for anticipated usage in Vic

**Recommended Solution:** - No \$1000 deposit required to establish account/agreement as accounts are paid month in advance

#### 4) Location/service provision for public route services

##### Melbourne Airport

###### **Current service/issues:**

- **Skybus express CBD service** to and from city/airport every 10 minutes departing from front lane of arrivals forecourt with good frequency and access for bus and passengers. A significant premium is imposed on the operator to gain access to this front lane.
- **Route service no 478, 479, 500 and 901** stops are greater than 600m from terminal even though Department of Transport have insisted it must be immediately adjacent terminals.
- **Regional Shuttles to Geelong, Bendigo, Ballarat, Dandenong, Frankston, Shepparton, Wodonga and North West suburbs** depart regularly from convenient and central location in the middle lane of the arrival forecourt.

###### **Recommended solutions:**

- Dedicated stops required within the terminal for route 478, 479, 500 and Smart Bus 901
- There is significant traffic conflict in the arrivals forecourt as coaches are fighting for parking space with public cars in arrivals forecourt, the airport must not allow private cars in the forecourt or more strictly police current arrangements.

##### Avalon Airport (Melbourne)

###### **Current service/issues:**

- Bus services operate both to and from Melbourne and to and from Geelong and the Bellarine Peninsula. All buses depart immediately outside the Arrival Hall.

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## **Sydney Airport**

In 2008, 33 million passengers passed through the international and domestic terminals, accommodated 298,000 aircraft movements and handled 647,000 tonnes of freight. SACL recently tabled its 20 year master plan, highlighting the expected growth in passenger movements up to 2029. The master plan indicates that some increases in public bus, coach and mini bus facilities will occur.

However, history has shown, when expansion/modifications at the airport has occurred in the past, such work ultimately results in loss of kerb space for passengers pick up. Bus and coach expansion should be commensurate with passenger growth.

The road network in and around the airport precinct is heavily patronised, and is subject to constant review by the Transport Authorities and Sydney Airport Corporation Ltd (SACL) Ground Transport Managers. BusNSW, along with TNSW, NSW Taxi Council, Motor Traders Association (Hire cars), NSW Police and other airport stakeholders work closely with SACL to ensure that all transport stakeholders' operational requirements are taken into consideration when changes in the operating environment are proposed.

### **1) Access and facilities/service provision for bus & coach operators and drivers**

Over the past few years, changes to operating arrangements have been introduced to accommodate a smart card access/fee arrangement that is soon to be replaced by an E-tag system. Access to the smart card/e-tag system is limited to TNSW Accredited operators which was an initiative brokered by TNSW. Another major change was introduced late in 2010, whereby the bus/coach holding areas, for use by vehicles servicing the domestic and international terminals, were closed due to re-development of the areas, and relocated to an area within the long term car park. In the main, it is an improvement in that the driver facilities in the new area are a vast improvement on what was provided in the old areas.

However, as with all changes there are also losses. The holding areas prior to the changes were in close proximity to the international and domestic terminals. The new area, within the confines of the long term car park, is approximately 2km from the domestic terminal and 5 km from the international terminal.

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## Issue:

Prior to the relocation of the holding areas, drivers could walk from the holding areas, to the arrivals areas and locate passenger groups prior to driving vehicles to the pick-up bays. Under the new arrangements, drivers need check flight arrivals via the Flight Information Display (FID) screens in the drivers area, then allow sufficient time for passengers to pass through customs/baggage collection. Drivers then drive from the holding area to pick up bays, pay the appropriate fees, then proceed to locate passengers, and then return to the vehicle. This situation is being managed, in the main, when there is a single group, usually with a tour guide, but shuttle operators who have a number of groups arriving on different flights do not have sufficient time to load vehicles, and are being issued with infringement notices for over staying parking time limits.

The other issue that frustrates drivers is that the information on the FID's is not always accurate and drivers arrive at the pick up bays to find that the flight has been delayed, but the respective airlines have not updated the flight information.

## Recommended solution:

- Current time limits for bus/coach up to 14 seats be increased to 40 minutes to allow for locating, and pick up of passengers.
- SACL move to ensuring that all flight information is at "real time" and adjustments are made in a timely manner.

## 2) Coach Access and facilities/service provision for passengers

Facilities and service provision for the majority of passengers is accommodated, but the passengers that arrange to be met by the shuttle bus operators, a great majority not having a good knowledge of the English language, are experiencing difficulties in locating their respective transport provide due to the time limits being imposed on operators, and the lack of suitably qualified 'meet and greet" airport personnel

There is a concierge desk at the International Terminal, but this is operated on a commercial basis. Operators enter into an arrangement, at cost, who engage the concierge company to advertise the availability of bus/coach services to various locations, and also sell seats on the operator's behalf. In doing so it could be argued that the concierge is implicit in allowing the

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operator to flout the NSW Passenger Transport Act (PTA) Regulations (R60 2 (b)) that prohibits “touting for passengers”.

### Recommended solution:

- Allow for additional time for shuttle bus operators to locate and loading of passengers, and also have suitably qualified “meet and greet personnel” employed by SACL be located in the arrival areas of the domestic and International terminals, to assist passengers in locating operators whom they have entered into an arrangement for transport from the airport precinct.
- Have TNSW review the PTA Regulations to ensure that an operator or an operator’s agent does not “tout” for services.

### 3) Cost of access and requirements for establishing an account/agreement with the airport management

Current service:

- No charge for set down of passengers at departure set down areas
- Cost per vehicle up to 14 seats \$4.00 for 30 minutes
- Cost per vehicle 15-29 seats \$6.00 for 40 minutes
- Cost per vehicle 30 + seats \$11.00 for 40 minutes
- Business rules for the soon to be introduced e-tag system are not yet known, but it is envisaged that the arrangements will be a lot less onerous than the existing smart card/cash systems for both SACL and the bus/coach operator.

### 4) Location/service provision for public route services

#### Current Service/issues

Express bus services pick up and set down passengers on a pre-booked arrangement at both Domestic and International terminals. These services are provided by:

- Australia Wide Coaches
- Greyhound
- Premier Motor Service
- Murrays Coaches.

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Sydney Buses Route 400 operates between Burwood and Bondi Junction with service intervals of between 15 & 20 minutes operating from 5.00am to midnight. All services set down and pick up at the International and Domestic terminals.

A service did operate between the Sydney CBD and the Airport some time ago, but was withdrawn, following the introduction of the rail service that operates via the airport precinct on journeys between Liverpool and Sydney CBD

However, the rail service is poorly patronised due to the cost to the passenger, and the lack of luggage space within the carriages. Rail services operate between 5.00am and 11.30pm at intervals of 15 – 20 minutes.

### **Recommended solution:**

Reintroduce regular bus services between Sydney Airport and the Sydney CBD.

### **Hobart Airport**

#### **1) Coach access and facilities/service provision for coach operators and drivers for example.**

**Issue:** Coach Drivers are not permitted to leave their coach unless coach and driver details have been forwarded onto the security firm before arrival at the airport. If communication between the coach company and the security company breaks down then the driver has to remain with the vehicle. Parking for coaches is extremely limited. There are 2 spaces at the Virgin Blue end only. If these spaces are occupied then the coach has to drive around until they are empty.

**Recommended solution:** Under the current Tasmanian Public vehicle licensing all coach drivers must have a national criminal history check. This check should entitle the coach driver to a national airport accreditation clearance for a specific parking zone within the airport. The development of more parking within proximity the terminal building would reduce the congestion at the 2 parking bays allocated.

#### **2) Coach access and facilities/service provision passengers for example**

**Issue:** When the driver is unable to meet the arriving group there is difficulty in finding the group from the driver and difficulty finding the coach for the group.

**Recommended Solution:** More coach parking is allocated near the terminal. Once the driver has met with the group the vehicle is then moved to a space directly in front of the arrival area.



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3) **Cost of access and onerous requirements for establishing an account/agreement with the airport for example**

Hobart airport work on a pay as you leave the terminal by cash only. This arrangement is acceptable as long as the operation of the cash machine is working.

4) **Location & Service**

**Issue:** Under the current arrangement at Hobart airport if a public vehicle company has a paid for commercial parking space then security arrangements are not required. This applies even if there is a new driver or an unknown vehicle parked in the paid for space. Companies that do not pay for a commercial space are required to provide driver and vehicle details and these details are not always passed on.

**Recommended solution**

Enough dedicated parking spaces provided for public vehicle companies without paid for commercial parking.