

VIEW FROM CANBERRA



May 2018

Freeloaders targeted as part of BIC campaign

I launched a campaign recently at the QBIC conference that was held on Sunday April 6 calling on bus operators to think seriously about not supporting suppliers - meaning to consider not buying their products - if they are not a member of BIC, because they are what I described as 'freeloaders'.

I describe 'freeloaders' as suppliers who decide not to join BIC but are more than happy to receive all of the wins that BIC has in its dealings with governments and leverage off resources and advice provided by BIC and not contribute one iota.

I explained at QBIC that BIC was a unique organisation in that both operators and suppliers can be members of the organisation and are eligible to nominate for positions on the BIC Council.

Chassis manufacturers, body manufacturers, manufacturers of Australian and imported complete buses (including monocoque designs) air-con units and sets of seats, pay their membership in the form of a levy on each unit delivered to the market.

This levy system was in place before I even started in the role of Executive Director in 2002. The levy has served Industry very well in funding the BIC and supporting the BIC research, policy and advocacy efforts, that suppliers, operators and State Associations alike have all benefited from.

Other suppliers not listed in the categories above pay a set annual membership fee.

The fact that suppliers are members of the BIC also allows us to keep State Association membership fees at a minimum. It is a win-win for everyone to support the suppliers who support the BIC by being members.

This campaign is about supporting BIC supplier members. Why consider buying a bus, or air-con unit or set of seats from a manufacturer who does not support your industry? Or at least if you are going to buy a vehicle or a chassis or a body or set of seats or air-con unit, ask the question: "Are you a member of BIC? Do you pay the BIC levy like the

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majority of suppliers do?” If the answer is NO, I encourage *you* to encourage *them* to join BIC and stop freeloading.

Some of these suppliers try to hide behind being Platinum, Gold or Silver partners of State Associations as their contribution. This is not good enough in my view. I don't blame State Associations taking the money, but if you look at the majority of the suppliers who are supporting State Associations in this way, they are also members of the BIC. I am asking State Associations to also consider supporting BIC supplier members before taking the so called 'partnership' money from these 'freeloaders'.

Luckily there are only a few who are not members of BIC but they need to get on board and I need your help.

Start by checking out the BIC members online directory on Ozebus (ozebus.com.au – go to member centre), and next time, every time, you get a visit from a salesman or you are at a bus conference or expo, ask the important question: “ARE YOU supporting my Industry by being a supplier member of BIC?”

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