



Transport &
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SYDNEY CBD COACH STRATEGY

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Sydney CBD Coach Strategy

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■ 1 Executive Summary

The purpose of the CBD Coach Strategy is to provide solutions to better manage the operations of long distance, charter and tourist coaches in the Sydney CBD.

The CBD Coach Strategy was developed by NSW Transport and Infrastructure (NSWTI) in consultation with key stakeholders including Bus NSW, City of Sydney Council,

NSW Maritime, Sydney Chamber of Commerce, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Sydney Metro, Tourism and Transport Forum and Tourism NSW.

A number of workshops and investigative studies were conducted to examine existing issues with coach operations in the CBD and to canvass options and develop actions to improve coach operations and traffic flow in the CBD.

Key issues identified include:

- A lack of long term parking opportunities for coaches in the CBD;
- Varying levels of capacity to accommodate coaches at accommodation and tourist sites;
- Illegal parking by coaches to ensure passenger safety and/or reduce the distance passengers are required to walk to their destination from the coach;
- Limited enforcement of short stay coach parking arrangements; and
- A view that Sydney Coach Terminal facilities are inadequate on the basis that nearly all pick up and set down bays are congested and open to the elements.

Key recommendations to address the identified issues include:

- Opening the 55 space coach parking facility at King Street Wharf for use by long distance, tourist and charter operators;
- The development of individual Transport Access Plans for major tourist and accommodation destinations;
- Increased enforcement of short stay coach parking arrangements following the opening of the King Street Wharf long stay facility; and
- Completion of a Sydney Coach Terminal scoping study to examine alternative locations for the Coach Terminal within Central Station precinct.

The CBD Coach Strategy provides the way forward for coach operators, local and state government agencies, tourist and accommodation site entities and other stakeholders to plan for and ensure the effective operation and management of coaches in the CBD.

The Strategy highlights that no one single entity can alone manage coach operations in the CBD, and that all stakeholders must work collaboratively to continuously improve coach management in the CBD.

■ 2 Introduction and Background

The *Central Sydney Tourist Coach Strategic Plan* was released in April 1997 by the City of Sydney, Tourism NSW, Bus and Coach Association (now Bus NSW) and the former Department of Transport (now NSWTI) in response to increased coach congestion in the Sydney CBD, particularly around The Rocks and Circular Quay.

In anticipation of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, the Plan made a number of recommendations, including the implementation of CBD coach permit scheme and new long term coach parking areas to the east and west of the CBD.

Following a downturn in tourism post the 2000 Olympics and resultant improvement in CBD coach operations, the recommendations were not widely implemented.

In the last few years tourist and long distance coach activity in the CBD has again increased. This has resulted in increased coach congestion and a need for additional short stay and long stay coach parking in and around the Sydney CBD. Notwithstanding the increased coach activity, a Bus NSW survey conducted in 2007 found that there has been an overall reduction of short and long stay coach parking spaces in the CBD over the same period.

In recognition of these issues, NSWTI released a Sydney CBD Coach Strategy Discussion Paper in December 2008. The paper was a follow on from previous initiatives and designed to develop and implement the way forward in terms of coach operations in the Sydney CBD, with input from key stakeholders. The Discussion Paper included a number of proposed actions and initiatives including:

- An audit of key CBD coach destinations, incorporating a review of key hotel and accommodation sites, tourist precincts and long term parking locations to determine capacity against current and future requirements;
- Resolving ownership of the new 55 space King Street Coach layover and opening it for use by coach operators;
- Undertaking a scoping study to consider options for relocating and or upgrading the Sydney Coach Terminal at Central Station; and
- A passenger survey at the Sydney Coach Terminal on factors affecting their travel choices, particularly favoured arrival and departure points in Sydney to gauge interest in alternative sites.

Following the release of the Discussion Paper, NSWTI hosted meetings and workshops with key stakeholders to discuss the development of a Sydney CBD Coach Strategy. Invited stakeholders included:

- Bus NSW;
- City of Sydney Council;
- Maritime NSW;
- Sydney Chamber of Commerce;
- Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority;
- Sydney Metro;
- Tourism and Transport Forum; and
- Tourism NSW.

■ 3 Tourist and Charter Coaches

Tourist and charter coaches service a broad range of sites across the Sydney CBD, including hotels and serviced apartments, tourist and cultural attractions, restaurants and heritage precincts. They form a core element of an effective public transport system and are essential in ensuring the growth of a global city like Sydney.

3.1 Short Stay Parking

Short stay coach parking generally refers to the provision of coach parking to facilitate the picking up or setting down of passengers only. An effective short stay parking system depends on an appropriate allocation and availability of venue parking and kerbside space for coaches. Extended use of short stay coach parking by coach operators leads to traffic congestion and is an inefficient use of short term parking. Coaches need to be moved on quickly to ensure sufficient turnover to meet demand.

Enforcement is an effective element in ensuring that sufficient levels of kerbside space are maintained for coaches. However, enforcement of short stay coach parking without sufficient long stay parking means coaches will circle the CBD looking for short term opportunities which further contributes to congestion.

The Discussion Paper proposed an audit of short and long stay CBD coach parking to identify the number of spaces available and their location as well as to identify any issues experienced at specific locations.



NSWTI completed the audit in August 2009. Key findings of the audit were:

- Accommodation and tourist sites have varying levels of capacity for coaches. Some sites were identified as having insufficient capacity to accommodate coaches during peak times, while others had sufficient capacity throughout the day;
- At some locations, coaches were found to be parking illegally due to inadequate drop off facilities or in order to reduce the walking distance to the entrance of a site; and
- Limited enforcement of short stay coach parking arrangements.

Actions

In response to the short stay coach parking issues identified in the audit, the Strategy sets out the following key actions:

1. The development of Transport Access Plans for major accommodation and tourist destination sites.
2. Each Transport Access Plan is to be jointly developed by accommodation and tourist site management, NSWTI, City of Sydney, Bus NSW, the RTA and other stakeholders as required.
3. Transport Access Plans will initially be developed for those venues and locations identified in the audit as having the highest risk, with Plans for other venues to be developed as needs are identified.
4. The Transport Access Plans will include:
 - Information on the location and contact details for venues, including a map;
 - An operational plan that addresses access for all modes to the site including coaches, taxis, delivery and personal vehicles;
 - Appropriate allocation of kerbside space to meet the needs of all modes, including time of day allocation to meet peak demand for each mode; and
 - An operational management plan to ensure effective use of kerbside allocation, including enforcement by facility management.
5. Transport Access Plans for each site are to be presented to City of Sydney Council to formalise arrangements and implement any road or signage changes recommended in the plans.
6. Transport Access Plans are to be distributed to key stakeholders and made available on key stakeholder websites.
7. Increased enforcement of short stay parking following the opening of the long stay coach facility at King Street Wharf.
8. All development applications for new and upgraded major tourist and accommodations sites are recommended to include appropriate provision for coach parking.

3.2 Long Stay Parking

Long stay parking for coaches is defined as parking for coaches that are not in the act of picking up or setting down passengers. The spaces are primarily used for coaches waiting between pick up and set down times or for drivers taking a meal or legal rest break, which requires the driver to be away from the vehicle.

The audit identified that there are few long term coach parking opportunities for coaches in the Sydney CBD. To address this issue, the State Government facilitated the construction of a long stay coach parking facility at Darling Harbour, near King Street Wharf. The facility accommodates 55 coaches and has a meal room, showers and bathrooms for drivers.

The audit report explored a number of possible locations for long term coach parking, including the King Street Wharf Coach Layover (55 spaces), the Warringah Freeway bus layover (approximately 33 spaces) currently being constructed and the Domain bus layover (up to 20 spaces). While both the Warringah Freeway layover and the Domain layover are designed primarily for route services, coach layover could be considered at these locations should demand warrant it.

The audit concluded that the King Street Wharf facility, which is to open in late 2009, will adequately cater to existing demand.



Actions

In response to the long stay coach parking issues identified in the audit, the Strategy sets out the following key actions:

1. NSWTI to open and promote the King Street Wharf coach facility as soon as possible in 2009;
2. NSWTI to call for expressions of interest for options to operate the coach facility on a long term basis;
3. City of Sydney to conduct increased enforcement of short stay coach parking at key tourist and accommodation sites following the opening of the King Street Wharf facility; and
4. NSWTI to monitor use of the King Street Wharf facility and to develop options for additional long stay coach parking as demand requires.

4 Interstate and Long Distance Coaches

The Sydney Coach Terminal at Central Station caters for regional and interstate long distance coaches. The facility provides comfortable passenger ticketing and waiting facilities as well as 14 roadside coach stopping bays, located in Eddy Ave and Pitt Street. Country Link Coaches also operate from this location, although the Country Link ticket booking office is located within the main rail station area.

Although the ticket booking office at Sydney Coach Terminal was recently upgraded, the roadside facilities are considered inadequate, with nearly all pick up and set down bays congested and open to the elements. With the construction of CBD Metro within proximity of the Coach Terminal, it was deemed timely to explore opportunities to relocate the Coach Terminal so that it better integrates with Central Station and CBD Metro, while providing improved weather protection and amenity to passengers.

The CBD Coach Strategy Discussion Paper proposed two actions in relation to the Sydney Coach Terminal as follows:

- A passenger survey at the Sydney Coach Terminal on factors affecting their travel choices, particularly favoured arrival and departure points in Sydney to gauge interest in alternative sites; and
- Engaging consultants with heritage experience to undertake a scoping study to identify options to upgrade the existing facility.

A survey of passengers was carried out in April 2009. The survey determined that Central Station was the ideal location for long distance coach services. Integration with other modes was a key element in passenger responses. The survey revealed:

- 80% of alighting passengers connected with other transport modes to get to their final destination;

- 93% of boarding coach passengers arrived by public transport; and
- 32% had destinations in the Sydney CBD.

The CBD Metro project impacts on the Sydney Coach Terminal, with a new station entrance proposed at the corner of Eddy Avenue and Pitt Street. The project provides the opportunity to redesign services at Eddy Avenue and Pitt Street and to deliver improvements in urban amenity.

Actions

In response to the issues identified at the Sydney Coach Terminal, the Strategy sets out the following key actions:

1. NSWTI to undertake a Sydney Coach Terminal scoping study to examine alternative locations for the Coach Terminal within Central Station precinct.

5 Actions and Stakeholder Responsibilities

As previously noted, the Strategy highlights that no one single entity can alone manage coach operations in the CBD, and that all stakeholders must work collaboratively to continuously improve coach management in the CBD.

On that basis, the Strategy sets out the following key responsibilities for stakeholders:

| Action | Responsible Agency | Timeframe |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| The development of Transport Access Plans for major accommodation and tourist destination sites. | NSWTI, City of Sydney, Bus NSW, the RTA and other stakeholders as required | Ongoing |
| Transport Access Plans for each site are to be presented to City of Sydney Council to formalise arrangements and implement any road or signage changes recommended in the plans. | NSWTI, City of Sydney | Ongoing |
| Transport Access Plans are to be distributed to key stakeholder and made available on key stakeholder websites. | NSWTI | Ongoing |
| All development applications for new and upgraded major tourist and accommodations sites are recommended to include appropriate provision for coach parking. | City of Sydney | Ongoing |
| NSWTI to open and promote the King Street Wharf coach facility as soon as possible in 2009. | NSWTI | December 2009 |
| NSWTI to call for expressions of interest for options to operate the coach facility on a long term basis. | NSWTI | January 2009 |
| Increased enforcement of short stay coach parking at key tourist and accommodation sites following the opening of the King Street Wharf facility | City of Sydney | Ongoing from December 2009 |
| Monitor use of the King Street Wharf facility and to develop options for additional long stay coach parking as demand requires | NSWTI | Ongoing from December 2009 |
| Undertake a Sydney Coach Terminal scoping study to examine alternative locations for the Coach Terminal within Central Station precinct | NSWTI | December 2009 |

