

## **SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSION OF ENQUIRY INTO THE LAND-BASED PUBLIC PASSENGER TRANSPORT INDUSTRY**

(11 July 2018)

On behalf of Thembalethu Bus Services based in Emalahleni I would like to thank this Commission for the opportunity granted to us to make this submission.

Thembalethu Bus Services is a paid-up member of SABOA and as such we support the principle points that Prof. Jackie Walters has brought to the Commission at a previous hearing in Johannesburg.

We as Thembalethu are of the belief that the current land-based public passenger transport industry structures are outdated and needs to be brought in line with global trends.

Subsidisation of public transport is not a concept unique to South Africa. Subsidisation can take on many forms, like in South Africa where certain bus services are subsidised but strict control is being enforced by government on routes, time tables, number of passengers, distances travelled etc. On the other hand, the Midi-bus taxi industry is not so prescriptively controlled by government and therefor this industry is indirectly subsidised in the sense that they are not required to provide monthly and annual financial statements. Creative ways of ensuring well loaded trips at times that they decide on with minimum book keeping is a given.

Saying all this Thembalethu's BOD are still of the opinion that all modes should be able to take a cut of the cake. As far back as 2005 and 2006 we have made proposals to the different levels of government to bring midi-taxis on board into the subsidy system.

However, it must be clearly understood that Government cannot subsidise two different services that are operating in competition with each other. Competition on subsidised routes should never be allowed between modes or operators. Competition should be limited to long term tender contract systems as currently prescribed in the act.

Proper and effective integrated public transport network plans – including both buses and mini-bus taxis - should be compiled. Only buses and mini-bus taxis participating in these transport plans should be subsidised.

In cases where midi-bus taxis are involved in the mentioned integrated public transport network, we should do away with the word midi-bus taxi and replace it with the word midi-buses. Taxis rendering the old door to door service should be referred as taxis and they should also be better controlled.

The subsidised bus industry should then consist of the following types of buses:

- Mini-buses - 16-25 seater buses
- Midi-buses - 26-50 seater buses
- Rigid buses - 51-90 seater buses
- Articulated buses - 91 seater plus

The idea, as in many other countries in the world, will then be that smaller vehicles will feed passengers to main corridors where bigger vehicles or trains will transport them to places near their end destinations from where they will be distributed to their final destinations. A good example of such a system is the Gautrain and Gautrain Buses.

The success of an effective, safe and affordable integrated public transport network depends on the following:

1. Availability of funds from Government
2. A well designed through flowing ticketing system where passengers can use one ticket for their full journey including midi-buses, buses and trains
3. Transfer facilities should be of the highest international standards to ensure safety but also speedy transfers as well as the opportunity to buy items. This will be the ideal opportunity to get the private industry involved.

The focus must always be the end user or passenger. In most cases he/she falls in the lower category of money earners in the country and as such it remains our duty to ensure that they get the best of service when it comes to safety, travelling times, waiting times, walking distances, up to standard facilities etc.

As mentioned earlier, more than 10 years ago Thembalethu Bus Services BOD proposed that the different modes of transport be integrated into a well-planned public transport network. We are therefor of the opinion that this Commission needs to get their final report on the table at the soonest to ensure a better travelling future for all South Africans.

Thank You



**JC Bonthuys**  
For Thembalethu Bus Service  
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