

Who's using SkyBus?

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Airport. City. The way to go.

1. Travelling home to Hobart after holiday in Melbourne - Katharine and Peter Scott.

"Our son lives here so we use it all the time. It's quick, and it's very convenient and reasonably priced. It saves him from having to pick us up."

2. Travelling to Sydney after business in Melbourne - Howard Moutrie.

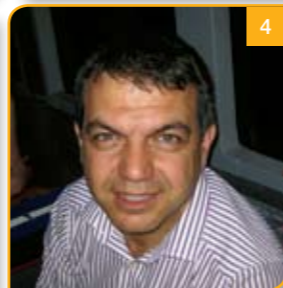
"It's just convenient and cheap. I'm an architect and we have an office here in King St but I'm from the Sydney office. I probably use SkyBus to visit the Melbourne office three to four times a year."

3. Travelling to Sydney for a short break - Louise Booth.

"It's fantastic. It's cheap and it's really fast, so there are no problems with peak hour. It's just below DFO [now Spencer Street Fashion Station] which is great too. It's very stress free."

4. Travelling to Sydney after business in Melbourne - Leo Iosifitis.

"I came down for the day for work. Normally I get a cab, but I was by myself this time and thought I'd try SkyBus. It's cheaper than getting a cab. They run every 10 minutes so it's not a long wait and the buses seem pretty clean."



Angela Powell
Customer Service manager

Angela has big plans for her company

She'd like to see SkyBus go global, although for now she's happy seeing it make small steps towards this.

Angela's only been with SkyBus 17 months, but already she's seen changes in this direction.

Staff numbers and passenger numbers have both increased, as have the frequency of SkyBus' trips to the airport.

"When I started we had a 15 minute interval between services, now we're at 10 for 14 hours every day"

More services are a challenge, but one that Angela - who's had more than thirty years in customer service - enjoys. "It's very exciting."

Already Angela's got 150 staff to watch over. She visits the SkyBus booths at Southern Cross and at Melbourne Airport most days and is always back at the depot by 2pm to oversee the changeover between the morning and afternoon crew.

And that's not to mention the meetings, memos and conversations that go into making SkyBus staff among the happiest around.

Angela says its SkyBus' happy employees that drive its exceptional customer service record.

"It's an understanding company and family comes first. That makes a big difference."

"If we keep our staff happy, our customers are happy too."

She says this is reflected in the great customer service record held by SkyBus. "And I'm not just saying that because I work here."

"I'm very pleased with the amount of compliments and complaints we get. On average, we service about two million passengers a year, and our average number of complaints a year is 52."

"That's a great achievement."

staff profile



Signs of improvement

Southern Cross Station is a great transport interchange, but the visibility of SkyBus at the station has never been great.

Importantly, it just got better.

Sporting a new, glossed floor and a number of new signs, SkyBus' terminal in the Southern Cross Station bus interchange has never been more convenient.

The signs - which point to airport express buses - can be found outside on Bourke St and at convenient locations inside the station.

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Secrets to success

Since 2000, SkyBus has quadrupled its passengers, from just under half a million to almost 2 million per year.

In the same period, the proportion of airport passengers using SkyBus has grown from 3% to 8%. So what does SkyBus do that is working? Surprisingly, it's no secret recipe: it's a well known formula, but it's followed meticulously. Here are the key ingredients:

- **Frequency:** SkyBus runs every 10-minutes from 6am to 8pm with the same timetable 7 days a week. It's a simple timetable with minimal wait time.
- **Information:** The solid red of the SkyBus brand is hard to miss. SkyBus also has comprehensive information online and real-time passenger information displays at its bus stops.
- **Major transport interchanges:** SkyBus operates between the two biggest transport interchanges of Melbourne – Melbourne Airport and Southern Cross Station.
- **Bus priority:** SkyBus uses the Tullamarine freeway and City Link and in particular sections has priority use of the emergency lane, and some traffic light priority in the CBD.
- **Service flexibility:** Because the SkyBus depot is right at the airport, SkyBus can provide "gap" buses at short notice whenever necessary.
- **Articulated buses:** SkyBus run mostly 18m articulated buses specially fitted with luggage racks. It also has a fleet of mini-buses in the city that take passengers between Southern Cross Station and their city hotels.
- **Customer service:** SkyBus is committed to giving its staff the trust to identify and resolve issues themselves and the ability to ask for help when needed, translating to excellent customer service.



One of SkyBus' secrets to success – its passenger information displays at our bus stops that reflect high frequency services.

Bendy buses

Tandem buses, bendy buses or banana buses? Slinky buses, caterpillar buses or accordion buses?

Whatever your preferred nickname for articulated buses, there are seven brand new ones joining SkyBus this year. That's on top of the two already in action. These super long buses measure 18 metres in length and have more seats, and, even better, more luggage space for when you get carried away with the fashion in Rome.

The Road Ahead

I was struck by a comment in the media earlier this year by Andrew Lezala, head of Melbourne's Metro trains.

Looking to the future, Lezala said that Metro – with the help of the government - would need to double their capacity in order to meet growing patronage number in the next 10 years. His comments prompted me to look back at SkyBus' patronage over the last decade. I found that in 2000, we carried about 500,000 people between the city and the airport, but that this year we will carry just over two million passengers.

That's a four-fold increase in passengers in just 10 years. I suspect that Metro would not want to – and probably couldn't - meet that rate of increase on the rail system. That is the great thing about buses. With much more moderate investment, we have increased our capacity to meet that demand – and, importantly, at no cost to the state.

In building this capacity, we have also developed a great service – our buses are right at the airport terminal door, they leave every 10 minutes, and staff members are actually there to offer customer service. Looking to the future, we're not expecting to, like Metro, wait another decade before our patronage doubles again.

Come 2013, we will have increased our capacity to carry four million passengers.

By Simon Cowen, Skybus Managing Director



Not lost in translation

The growing number of Chinese travellers to Australia can now enjoy their SkyBus timetable in Mandarin.

SkyBus decided on the move due to the high number of Mandarin speakers using its services, with Chinese travellers now making up 11 per cent of international traffic at Melbourne Airport.

The Mandarin timetables are readily available at all SkyBus ticket booths and at Melbourne Airport's international arrival terminal. SkyBus has even created a SkyBus Mandarin webpage to service this important sector of its customer base.

More flights, more often

The smallest members of the SkyBus fleet – its mini buses – have been sporting a big message recently.

The "More flights, more often" campaign is a joint initiative of Melbourne Airport and SkyBus. It's reminding Melbourne's residents and visitors that there's never been a better time to see the world.

Melbourne Airport can now boast 24 leading airlines which fly direct to cities all over the globe. Good-bye stop overs and expensive detours, hello quicker flight times and cheaper airfares.

SkyBus hits the big screen

SkyBus is about to hit the big screen, thanks to an appearance in the new Australian film, *Summer Coda*.

Makers of the movie requested that SkyBus feature in the film, a romantic drama set in southern Australia's orange groves. Not surprisingly really – what could be more southern Australian than a ride on SkyBus?

We're sure that was exactly what Rachael Taylor was thinking when she was filmed riding in one of the SkyBus fleet late last year. Taylor, a star in *Bottle Shock* and *Transformers*, is not the only big name in *Summer Coda*. Also among the cast were Alex Dimriades, Susie Porter, Nathan Phillips and Jackie Weaver. Look out for SkyBus' big moment when *Summer Coda* comes to a screen near you later this year.

Weathering the storm

There was minimal disruption for SkyBus passengers when freak storms hit Melbourne earlier this year.

The storms caused between \$2 and \$5 million of damage to Southern Cross station, but, fortunately, the worst of the destruction occurred to the translucent panels on the roof of the Station and not inside. Airport-bound travellers were still able to make their way to Melbourne Airport, with SkyBus temporarily shifting its operations to Lonsdale Street during the worst of the storm, in which high winds and hail caused significant damage across the city.



By Gregory Hywood
Chief Executive Tourism Victoria

Victoria's compelling combination of natural attractions, unique cultural and urban experiences, quality food and wine, and unparalleled program of events encapsulate the diverse experiences we have to share with the world.

Melbourne's city landscape has undergone a transformation over recent years stretching from Birrarung Marr and Federation Square to South Wharf and the Docklands.

We have seen growth in our world class sports precinct on the banks of the Yarra river, Southbank art and cultural precinct, business event facilities with the \$1.4 billion Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre development and vibrant tourism assets and accommodation offerings such as the Hilton Melbourne South Wharf and Crown Metropol.

These developments have linked both sides of the city and river and with Southern Cross Station sitting amongst these revitalised precincts, it is a transport hub that services both Melburnians and travellers alike.

The Southern Cross transport interchange links the Melbourne Airport, regional Victoria, interstate destinations and the emerging Docklands precinct with Melbourne's central business district. This central location provides a myriad of options for SkyBus customers when they first arrive in Melbourne.

The iconic landmark and its facilities have certainly undergone significantly change from when the station opened in 1859 with only a single train platform. The newly designed station is now an impressive arrival point for international, interstate, regional and suburban travellers to Melbourne, efficiently handling 30,000 passengers an hour during peak periods.

A whole world of depth, diversity and difference awaits visitors to Victoria and thousands of visitors begin their travels at Southern Cross Station. Travelling around Melbourne and its surrounds is straightforward for visitors with the station offering train, tram and bus links to countless destinations. Many of our city's most popular attractions are only a short distance away including the award-winning Melbourne Aquarium, Federation Square, historic Queen Victoria Market and sports precinct including the new AAMI Rectangular Stadium.

When the excitement of the city gets too much, visitors to our state can be easily whisked away to one of our nearby regional havens. Victoria's compact diversity means visitors can find that special getaway within an hour of the city centre.

Gregory Hywood
Chief Executive, Tourism Victoria