



Mercedes-Benz

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Premier Illawarra's GONG Shuttle a hit with locals

The NSW Government's GONG Shuttle, a new free bus service within Wollongong, has already carried 200,000 passengers in its first seven weeks of operation.

Launched slightly ahead of time on 18th March this year, the shuttle is a joint venture with Premier Illawarra, the major bus operator along the coastal strip.

John King, managing director of the Premier Transport Group, said his company selected both the Mercedes-Benz O 500R (OH 1830L) and the low-entry O 500U (OH 1830LE) chassis for the shuttle service because they are ideally suited for this kind of operation.

"We've been using both of these versatile chassis on some of our regular route services and we are quite pleased with results," said John. "We find them to be economical and reliable in our undulating terrain. They are the right fit for the shuttle in terms of capacity and economy of scale."

"Our drivers and mechanics are familiar with the O 500R and O 500U models, there are less spare parts to have in our inventory and there is also the matter of economy. When compared against the running costs of our larger capacity Mercedes-Benz O 500LE route buses we are saving diesel usage with these models."

"We rarely use the full capacity of the EGR turbocharged engines on the O 500R and O 500U shuttle buses and are able to achieve further economies as the result of driver training."

The eight air-conditioned shuttle buses, in their eye-catching, bright green livery, include bodies built by both Volgren and Custom Coaches. A further 10 Mercedes-Benz O 500LE with Volgren bodies are on order.

The eighteen new buses form part of the Government's recently announced 300 growth bus strategy for NSW. The Illawarra region is the first beneficiary of this strategy with the Government providing funding for twenty buses, all but two of which are allocated to Premier Illawarra.

"In line with the Government's transport strategy, the additional 10 buses will be used on new routes as well as providing increased frequency on existing routes," John said. "The end result is great news for local commuters who will enjoy the benefits of an improved service."

Excluding the shuttle buses and 21 units on order, Premier Illawarra has purchased 11 Mercedes-Benz buses over the past twelve months including four O 500R's, three O 500U's and four O 500LE's.



John King, managing director of the Premier Transport Group with one of the eight new O 500R's that service the GONG Shuttle.

Peter builds Tasmanian fleet with Mercedes-Benz



The introduction of the Core Passenger Services Review in 2004 by the Tasmanian Government provided Peter O’Driscoll with much food for thought. So much so that when the Creswell family’s Ace Coaches came up for sale in 2006, Peter, a Bridgestone Tyres franchisee, bought the company.

Peter said that while Ace Coaches was a long established school bus and charter operation with 11 buses, he believed that the findings of the Core Review would provide him with new opportunities.

Subsequently, when the Tasmanian Government introduced sweeping changes to passenger services in 2008, Peter handed back the majority of his school runs. He then began concentrating more heavily on school charters as well as acquiring the route bus service between New Norfolk and Hobart formerly operated by Hobart Coaches.

Now known as O’Driscoll’s Derwent Valley Link, the company also provides charter services to around 35 schools in Hobart.

“We operate charters mainly throughout southern Tasmania and have grown our charter market between 15-20% each year,” said Peter.

“One of the government’s new initiatives makes it much more economical for operators to invest in new buses, so we have bought two Mercedes-Benz O 500R’s and two O 500U’s in the last six months. Currently, we have eleven Mercedes in a fleet of 18.”

“Our drivers often work 12-hour shifts so it is important that they have new modern buses to make their task easier. Our passengers really love the new buses too, with patronage increasing since we’ve introduced them. They find the O 500R’s to be quiet and provide a great ride.”

Peter said he was influenced to invest in new Mercedes buses because of the performance of the existing Mercedes-Benz buses he acquired with the Ace Coaches acquisition together with the attention to detail he experiences with Mercedes-Benz personnel.

“And of course, I get my tyres at a good price through my Bridgestone franchise,” Peter said with a chuckle in his voice.



Peter O’Driscoll is building his Hobart fleet with the Mercedes-Benz O 500R

Fred’s multi-purpose O 500LE

Fred Brack, managing director of Benalla Bus & Coach Lines, is getting maximum usage from his Mercedes-Benz O 500LE.

The Euro 5 compliant, SCR technology bus provides a town route bus service in Benalla between 9.00am and 3.00pm and is used as a school bus before and after those hours.

“We are getting pretty reasonable fuel economy from it, it’s very quiet and has never been in the workshop other than for services,” Fred said.

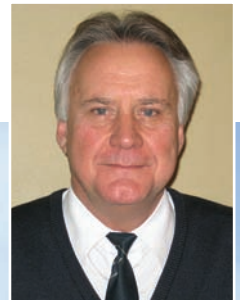
“The engine and transmission are both remarkably quiet, so much so we have even had complaints from some of our older passengers that they can’t hear it coming up to bus stops.”

Fred said the powerful 12 litre engine of the O 500LE makes school runs a bit of a breeze.

“The engine is so relaxed on these runs, it’s a piece of cake handling the hills around here.”

Benalla’s fleet also includes a Mercedes-Benz O 500RF 3 axle coach that is used for charters and touring.

“The coach is a dream to drive. Its sophisticated technology unobtrusively does its work in the background enabling you to simply enjoy the driving experience.”



Benalla Bus & Coach Lines Mercedes-Benz O 500LE City Bus and (above) Fred Brack, Managing Director, Benalla Bus & Coach Lines

O 500R winning friends in rural areas

Graeme Sandlant of Sandlant Coach Tours, in Stawell, Victoria, couldn't be happier with his recently purchased O 500R; one of six Mercedes-Benz in his fleet. He said the 300HP engine copes easily with runs up through Halls Gap and the Grampians as well as charter work in other parts of Victoria.

"We use it on school runs and charters. It's a very driver friendly bus and passengers appreciate the ride, ease of entry and comfort of the fully seat belted Coach Concepts body," said Graeme.

"We've only done about 7,000km so far but the fuel economy is great, which is one of the reasons we prefer Mercedes-Benz."

Further north in the Riverina, yet another operator has added an O 500R to his fleet - Makeham's Coaches. Makeham's of Wagga Wagga, commenced in 1983 by Lindsay and Annette Makeham, operate a fleet seven school buses and 12 touring coaches.



Their latest is a Mercedes-Benz O 500R which is used both as a school bus and for charter work.

Built by Coach Concepts, the air-conditioned O 500R is fitted with a TV and joins an earlier O 500U that was acquired in 2007 and built by Express Coach. A third O 500R is on order from Coach Concepts for delivery in June 2009.

The two current O 500's work the Nangus to Cootamundra and Gundagai to Wagga Wagga school runs, each of which is a 200km round trip.

Lindsay said the drivers enjoy the comfort and handling characteristics of the Mercedes-Benz O 500 Series.



Graeme and Vonda Sandlant with their latest Mercedes-Benz O 500R and (top) Makeham's Coaches latest O 500R

"We've only done about 7,000km so far but the fuel economy is great, which is one of the reasons we prefer Mercedes-Benz."

- Graeme Sandlant, Sandlant Coach Tours

750th bus delivered to Transperth

With two years remaining in a multi-year contract to supply Transperth with route buses, Mercedes-Benz has recently delivered the 750th bus.



Transperth's new O 500LE is the 750th bus to be delivered in a multi-year contract

Over the period of the contract, Mercedes-Benz began supplying O 405NH's and then the O 500LE model. These replace earlier O 405 and O 305 models in service with the Transperth fleet.

The O 500LE models have bodies built by Volgren in Perth in their purpose-built manufacturing facility.

Mercedes-Benz buses make up some 75% of the Transperth fleet.

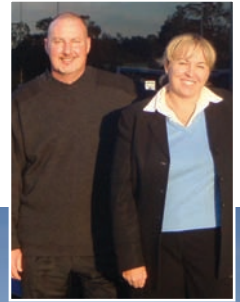
Shortened O 500U for Swan Hill

Peter Pickering's Swan Hill Bus Lines has a shortened version of the Mercedes-Benz O 500U on order.

The low floor 44-seat bus will operate on a new route service being proposed for introduction in Swan Hill next year.

The shorter length of the bus will enable it to more easily negotiate the tighter turns found within target pickup areas.

Bunbury City Transit adds two O 500LE's



Since acquiring Dave Adams' South West Coach Lines operations in late 2007, Veolia Transport WA has recently added a further two Mercedes-Benz O 500LE route buses to its Bunbury City Transit fleet.

South West Coach Lines is the major bus operator in the south west region of Western Australia and includes route bus and school services for Bunbury and Busselton.

The company also provides charter activities as well as operating regional services linking Perth and Mandurah with many communities in the south west region including Bunbury, Busselton, Augusta, Dunsborough, Manjimup, Collie and Nannup.

Last year the company introduced a service to the Perth domestic and international airport direct from Busselton.

A number of other new initiatives have been introduced by the company in the growing South West region.

South West Coach Lines has a combined fleet of 82 buses and coaches covering some 3.2 million kilometres annually.



One of Bunbury City Transit's Mercedes-Benz O 500LE City Buses and (top) Lisa Shreeve, at right, General Manager Veolia Transport WA with Operations Manager Lee Katseli

Order your Mercedes-Benz now!



Volgren School/Charter Buses ready for delivery. Volgren bodies to suit 57 passenger seats¹, Coachair A/C, 1500mm floor height, thru bins, radio/CD/PA system, racks, roof air intake. Mercedes-Benz O 500R 2 axle chassis, engine, EGR technology, ZF6HP592 auto transmission, full airbag suspension with fast raise and lower function, disc brakes, ABS. **Bullbar included.**



Also available. Coach Concepts bodied units on Mercedes-Benz O 500R 2 axle chassis. To suit 57 passenger seats¹ with ThermoKing A/C, thru bins, radio/CD/PA system, racks, roof air intake. Mills-Tui bodies also available².



Limited number of quality Midi-Buses. 10.1m Mills-Tui bodies to suit 35-43 passenger seats with ThermoKing A/C, radio/CD/PA system, parcel racks and nearside luggage bin. Mercedes-Benz OH 1228L chassis, 280HP engine, Mercedes-Benz 6-speed manual transmission, cruise control, full airbag suspension (independent front), engine brake, disc brakes, ABS and electronic braking.

3 axle Luxury Coach in-build and ready for delivery! 12.5m Coach Design body, Mercedes-Benz O 500R 3 axle chassis, 420HP engine, Mercedes-Benz 6-speed manual transmission, disc brakes, alloy wheels, cruise control, engine brake, electronic braking system, independent front suspension, 48 McConnell reclining passenger seats, restroom, ThermoKing A/C, TV system and loads more.

¹ Seats not installed. ² Enquire about the **Express Coach** bodied units currently in build. Images for illustrative purposes only.

For more information call Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach Group

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Rio Tinto adds three O 500R's to fleet

Mining giant Rio Tinto has added three new O 500R's to the fleet that services its Tom Price and Paraburdoo iron ore mining operations in the Pilbara region of Western Australia.

The latest buses join several Mercedes-Benz O 500RF 3 axle buses purchased in 2006 to transport workers to and from the two major mines which are 80kms apart.

The 54 seat, air-conditioned buses, built by Mills Tui, operate in temperatures exceeding 40 degrees in summer.

Rio Tinto has a fleet of 17 large buses servicing 10 major sites in the Pilbara region.



One of three new O 500R's delivered to the Pilbara region for Rio Tinto

 **Genuine Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach models now available.** See the latest range on display at the Mercedes-Benz Bus & Coach stand. 2009 BAV Conference. Prices start from \$60. 

Greg has an all Mercedes-Benz bus fleet

Greg Zischke is about to take delivery of an O 500R, his third, to add to his all Mercedes-Benz fleet of 12 school buses.

Based in Hatton Vale, halfway along the Warrego Highway between Brisbane and Toowoomba, Greg has 11 runs servicing major schools in Laidley, Hatton Vale and Ipswich.

"We started buying Mercedes in 1995 and still have six OH 1418's as well as a 1421, 1621, 1725, 1728 and an 1830."

"They have been very reliable and an added bonus is that we are only 45 minutes away from Mercedes Queensland headquarters so we head there for major services and spare parts," said Greg.

"Consequently we have been able to build quite a rapport with sales and service personnel there."

Greg's latest O 500R is built by Mills Tui and is fitted with parcel racks and air-conditioning. It will be used on a route currently serviced by one of the initial OH 1418, which will stay in reserve as a spare.

"The extra horsepower in the O 500R makes driving almost effortless and reduces gear changing to a minimum," Greg said.



Greg Zischke's third Mercedes-benz O 500R awaiting delivery

"The extra horsepower in the O 500R makes driving almost effortless and reduces gear changing to a minimum."

- Greg Zischke

Mercedes-Benz No 1 in Brazil

In Brazil, Mercedes-Benz has won the title of Commercial Vehicles Brand of the Year for the second consecutive year in the annual Lotus Awards. The award is based on sales figures for the preceding year.

Mercedes-Benz won 10 categories, including Chassis of the Year and Coach of the Year and has won 107 awards in this annual event.

Daimler Buses wins Major Dubai Contract

Daimler Buses has won a major contract to deliver 260 Mercedes-Benz Citaro buses to Dubai. Production of the new buses that meet Euro 5 emissions requirements has already commenced.

The new 12 metre buses will seat 33 passengers and include features such as extra heat insulation in the floor, insulated wheel housings and special glass for the windows. Air showers at the entrances distribute cold air and help keep temperatures stable inside the buses. Dubai's Road & Transport Authority already operates 80 Citaros.

Mercedes-Benz Citaro – Mobile Clinic



A Mercedes-Benz Citaro Mobile Clinic

The Mercedes-Benz Citaro chassis forms the platform for three new large capacity ambulances delivered to the Government of Dubai.

The ambulances will provide rapid medical assistance should major emergencies or disasters

occur or when there are insufficient regular ambulances available. Up to 20 people can receive care from four specialist personnel in one of the ambulances.



Inside one of the fully equipped ambulances

One of the ambulances is a mobile intensive care unit, fitted with an operating theatre for use in emergency situations with large numbers of injured victims. The second ambulance is designed for the treatment and transport of slightly injured patients, while the

third combines the functions of the other two.

Daimler Buses new Sales record

In 2008 Daimler Buses achieved its best ever sales result in its history. The business unit sold a total of 40,600 buses and chassis of the Mercedes-Benz, Setra, and Orion brands worldwide, an increase of 4% on the previous record, which was set in 2007. What's more, sales in Europe of Mercedes-Benz minibuses based on the Sprinter rose by 18% to 1,100 units.

New Mercedes-Benz Hybrid Bus in Operation

More than 250 customers from fifteen countries recently had the opportunity to experience for the first time the Mercedes-Benz Citaro G BlueTec Hybrid articulated bus.



The Mercedes-Benz Citaro G BlueTec Hybrid articulated bus

Experts from European transport operations praised features such as its completely emission free operation on some stretches of the route, its quiet drive system, its unique vehicle concept incorporating four electric wheel hub motors and its use of the world's largest lithium-ion vehicle battery. The battery stores energy from the diesel generator as well as that recuperated during braking.

The 4.8 litre diesel engine in the serial hybrid bus does not act as a primary drive unit, but rather drives the generator to produce electric power as required.

The first vehicles will be delivered to transport operators before the end of 2009. Market insiders anticipate an annual demand for at least 300 such buses in Western Europe. In North America, the Daimler Bus brand Orion already has 1700 hybrid buses in day-to-day operation.

World Premier for FuelCELL Hybrid Bus



The new Mercedes-Benz Citaro FuelCELL Hybrid bus

The latest development in Mercedes-Benz FuelCELL buses was unveiled at the UITP Congress in Vienna in June: the Citaro FuelCELL Hybrid.

The new Mercedes-Benz Citaro FuelCELL Hybrid has an enhanced fuel cell system, complemented by an all-new drive system

developed in synergy with the Citaro G BlueTec Hybrid. Shared components include axles fitted with electric hub motors, lithium-ion batteries to store energy, and all electrically powered ancillary components.

Thanks to the recovery of braking energy the Citaro FuelCELL Hybrid is able to achieve hydrogen savings up to 25%, depending on traffic conditions and topography.

This latest development uses much less hydrogen, emits no pollutants whatsoever while running and is virtually silent.