

# Tranzit Through Time

The Story of Tranzit Group 1924-2000

Author: Juliet Oliver

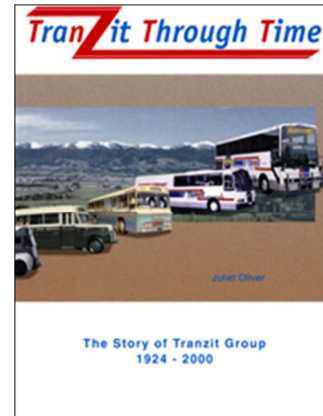
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Contact: Renee Snelgrove

Phone: +64 6 377 1227

Email: [renee@tranzit.co.nz](mailto:renee@tranzit.co.nz)



Tranzit Through Time tells the story of the family-owned Tranzit Group, from humble beginnings in 1924 to the present day, as told by three generations of the Snelgroves.

A thoroughly researched book, it succinctly compresses a comprehensive history into one concise volume, the journey along the way providing a fascinating insight into the growth of one of New Zealand's largest passenger transport operators. Tranzit Through Time is littered with charming asides and anecdotes, such as the friendly rivalry that existed between founder 'AJ' Snelgrove and his main competitor, Martin Smith. So friendly, in fact, that Smith was often a guest at the Snelgrove household for meals, and frequently Margaret Snelgrove would not know which one – her husband or Martin – would be in attendance, depending on who was out driving at the time.

Tales of run-ins with transport licensing authorities – featuring regular interference from NZ Railways – abound, the author clearly illustrating how they influenced the development of the company. Several examples of license applications are published, one passage noting that "charter permits were given on condition that fares must be all-inclusive, including the trip, the event and supper."

Tranzit Through Time is divided into three chapters – one for every generation – the dominant moments being charted in each. Chapter two covers the decades during which AJ's son Bert Snelgrove was at the helm, while chapter three takes us to the present day of management under Bert's sons Paul and Keven. By the late 1990's, Tranzit Group – originally Grey Bus Service, then Royal Blue and later just Blue Bus Service – had grown under the stewardship of the third generation into a nationwide business, thanks to shareholdings in Newmans and InterCity.

Along the way, they purchased eight other bus companies and added rental and freight services, expanding to 220 vehicles, 350 staff, and four depots. The book concludes as the fourth generation waits patiently in the wings.

As one would expect in a bus book, Tranzit Through Time contains a broad selection of historical and modern photos – including a wonderful colour centerspread – but the main purpose of the book is not to provide a pictorial record of buses over the years, but rather a record of the history of one of NZ's longest surviving family-owned bus companies. In this the book succeeds admirably, and anyone with an interest in passenger transport, or for that matter local history, will find this book a compelling read.

