

TAXI TALK

VOICE OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

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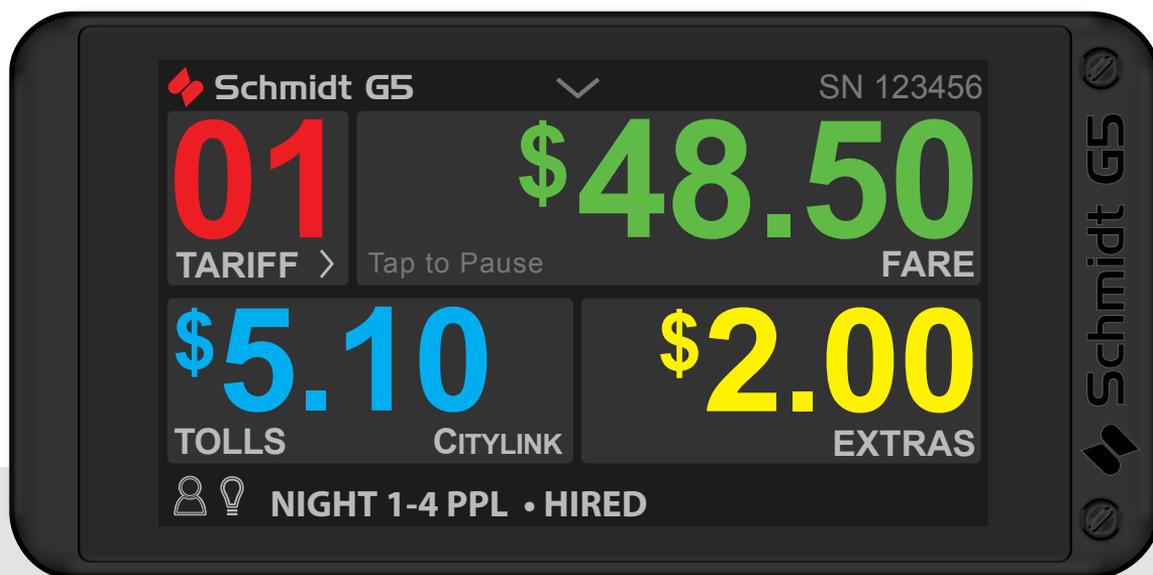


HEALESVILLE SANCTUARY

Healesville Sanctuary celebrated its 81st birthday in May. The Sanctuary has come a long way from its humble beginnings and is now an internationally renowned wildlife and conservation centre. The Sanctuary had grown from humble beginnings when, in 1921 Dr Colin MacKenzie was granted 70 acres of land at a lease of one shilling a year to study native fauna for the purposes of medical research, to become one of the most innovative and exciting conservation-based organisations today.

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* Optional Feature

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H Chen; K Khan.
Congratulations to all winners

Taxi Talk magazine, a monthly publication for the Victorian taxi industry, is published by Trade Promotions Pty Ltd in collaboration with the Victorian Taxi Association Inc (VTA). The VTA is the peak industry body in Victoria, fostering the interests and wellbeing of taxi-cab drivers, taxi-cab permit holders and Taxi Booking Services across the state.

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VICTORIAN TAXI ASSOCIATION

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Taxi Talk has agreed to advertise taxi clubs because those clubs have stated that they and their products comply with all applicable laws and regulations relating to insurance for taxi operators.

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READY TO RIDE

service

is a commercial activity



David Samuel
VTA CEO

I would like to take this opportunity to raise with you a couple of what I see as important issues in the current theoretical discussion relating to the emergence of ride hail services in Victoria.

In determining how ride hail services should be regulated, the first issue that must be addressed is why any specific law, regulation or licencing is required when there are already rules in place that regulate the provision of commercial passenger vehicle services.

At the outset, it must also be made clear that this kind of service we call ride hailing is a commercial activity.

It does not satisfy the definition of car-pooling as currently defined in Sections 86 and 87 of The Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 (the Act) because as the travel is not 'incidental' to the driver's journey (in fact it is the sole purpose of the journey), and both the driver and the app provider are profiting from the passenger's travel.

Victorian laws and regulations must address the emergence of the 'electronic hail' whereby the distinction between hail and pre-booked work has been significantly blurred.

The legislation needs to embrace and define the term electronic hail, as distinct from a pre-booking.

Importantly, ride hail does not constitute a pre-booking. Ride hail services, like Uber X, do not permit advanced bookings like taxi and hire car

industry booking systems. It is limited to 'ready to ride' services.

This is important for a number of reasons, none more so than providing a clear justification for drivers who engage in the provision of type of service to meet exactly the same knowledge testing requirements (if they are to exist) as a taxi driver.

Simply imposing hire car regulations upon ride hail type services is not sufficient. Hire car regulations differ from taxis on the grounds that hire cars accept only pre-booked services for a different market to taxis and thus have the ability to pre-plan journeys.

This is the not the case with an electronic hail.

Uber themselves offer two distinct services for two different markets – traditional hire car services via Uber Black and a new illegal hybrid model via Uber X. This again highlights the differences between the two.

continued page 6



READY TO RIDE

service

continued from page 5

This conceptual definition of the product also provides a clear justification as to why the price these services provide should be regulated by a maximum fare. Customers are not able to make an informed choice because of the immediacy of the booking.

Furthermore, paying more will not necessarily see the service delivered in a more timely fashion because during periods of high demand the wait times are constrained by supply across all services. Employing surge pricing in periods of high demand does not alter supply despite them being asked to pay more.

If ride hailing services are to be permitted to conduct their service without the need for drivers to complete the taxi driver knowledge modules, or abide by maximum fare regulations, both must be removed from taxis to allow them to compete on fair grounds.

As the VTA have repeated on a number of occasions, if these regulations were removed, the biggest loser would be the consumer burdened with either, or both, higher prices and/or a decline in service quality.

Any regulation should be based on its need to address a market failure or ensure community/passenger/driver safety.

In this respect, it is important to remember that a wide ranging review (Victorian Taxi Industry Inquiry – [VTII]) of the Victorian taxi and hire car industry has only just been completed by apparently eminent experts.

It has been suggested that the timing of the review was poor, because since its completion the Uber product(s) has arrived in Australia. The VTA do not share this view.

Ride hail providers, like Uber, were well established in overseas markets during the period in which the VTII took place and the VTII team travelled overseas to discuss issues affecting other jurisdictions as part of the Inquiry process.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest that one of the most important aspects of this discussion, or outcomes derived from it, must be imposition of a new penalty and sanction regime.

The sanction and penalty regime as it currently applies, must be reviewed and adjusted to recognise this shift and the proven ineffectiveness of the existing regime to deter systematic non-compliance.

Penalties and sanctions should present a meaningful commercial disincentive to any party that might otherwise make a commercial decision to continue to operate outside the law and include provisions such as a loss of demit points for a repeat offender.

It is important to recognise that there have always been individuals who break the law and provide illegal taxi and hire car services.

In the past the penalties and sanctions were high enough to dissuade individuals from continuing to break the law.

The emergence of a company in Victoria that is willing to systemically break the law in providing illegal services despite the imposition of fines upon its drivers (and to go as far as to offer to pay the fines on behalf of its drivers) demonstrates that this paradigm has shifted significantly.

Penalties and sanctions should present a meaningful commercial disincentive to any party that might otherwise make a commercial decision to continue to operate outside the law. ❖

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This publication is designed to help new taxi drivers understand how the industry is structured, and give an overview of the rules and regulations that apply.

It is intended as a reference to help drivers fulfil their role and duties.

Drivers are encouraged to build their own understanding of the industry and the regulatory obligations.

The VTA will distribute this publication through the Networks or drivers can drop by the VTA office, Suite 2, 85 Salmon St, Port Melbourne to pick up a copy.

Visit the VTA website at www.victaxi.com.au to download a copy of the Driver Companion. ❀



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- Industry representation and advocacy
- Member briefings, newsletters and updates
- Members only tools and advice
- Membership of the Operator Collective which meets at least 4 times per year and representatives on the VTA Council, the policy formation arm of the VTA
- Assistance for your drivers with compliance issues
- Discounted member rates at VTA Annual Conference, Annual Lunch and ATIA Conference
- Access to VTA member fuel deal with BP

SPECIAL OFFER - the VTA is pleased to offer a special rate for new Operator members for the remainder of 2015 for only \$10 per taxi (including GST).

Operator membership for a single metropolitan taxi is usually \$66 (including GST).

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Web: www.victaxi.com.au **Email:** admin@victaxi.com.au



Drivers' lunch in GEELONG

The VTA were delighted to host a lunch for drivers in Geelong in early June at the Geelong Taxi Network.



Despite the rain and chilly conditions, plenty of drivers came down to enjoy the delicious pizza on offer, catered by the Happy Camper pizza truck.

The lunch was a great opportunity for drivers to catch up with one another and talk to VTA staff about current issues and upcoming events.

After hosting a number of driver lunches and dinner in metropolitan Melbourne, the VTA wanted to extend the reach of these events as a small gesture to our urban and regional drivers and thank them for their hard work within the community.

The VTA is planning a number of driver events throughout 2015 in Melbourne and regional Victoria. ♣

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ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF CRIME



Victims of crime in Victoria may be eligible for State Government Funded Crime Compensation Assistance if:

- You are the victim and have been directly injured as the result of a crime.
- You have suffered either a physical or a psychological injury.
- The crime was reported to the police and you made a police statement.
- The crime was committed in

the last two years in Victoria, Australia

- You are related to a victim of crime.

Crime that has impacted victims may include physical assault, domestic violence, family violence, domestic abuse, sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, armed robbery, violent robbery, aggravated burglary, child abuse, child sexual abuse, indecent assault, home invasion, stalking, threats to kill, workplace assault, manslaughter, murder, culpable driving, dangerous driving, road rage, breach of Intervention Order, threat to harm, bullying, conduct endangering life or any other violent crime committed against a person.

Matters such as childhood sexual

abuse and domestic violence may in certain circumstances have occurred beyond two years.

The offender does not need to be apprehended or charged or convicted in order for crime victims to apply for Compensation.

Applications for Crime Compensation can also be made over the phone on 1800 000 055 or by post if a victim is unable to travel.

Victims of Crime Compensation & Counselling Services refers victims to solicitors and other service providers in Victoria and other states experienced in working with victims to guide them through the legal process in order to ensure they access all their crime compensation entitlements. ❀

New taxi tolls



From 1 July 2015 there will be new taxi tolls for travel on CityLink and EastLink.



EastLink

New taxi toll stickers are available from your depot.

Topping up your account

Easiest option: visit citylink.com.au to set up an automatic payment.

- Online: citylink.com.au
- At the EastLink Customer Centre: 2 Hillcrest Avenue, Ringwood 3134. (Top up amount will appear on your account by the end of next business day.)
- Over the phone: **1300 360 962** (8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday).
- Touch machines at Melbourne Airport.

- At any participating 7-Eleven, United Petroleum or Australian Newsagent Federation outlet.

Please note: Payments made to accounts within the last 24 hours may not be reflected in the number of beeps when travelling on CityLink or EastLink.

For more information

Web: citylink.com.au
Email: comcare@citylink.com.au
Phone: 1300 360 962
 From 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday

Please attach 2 taxi toll stickers – one to the dashboard or windscreen (top left corner) and the other to the inside rear passenger window.



Taxi toll stickers should be placed adjacent to passenger fare stickers.

Taxi tolls as at 1 July 2015

CityLink Western Link	\$5.70
CityLink Southern Link	\$5.70
CityLink Both links	\$7.90
CityLink Balmrum Avenue only (Balmrum Street Extension)	No toll
EastLink Mella Tunnel or Mulla Mulla Tunnel	\$2.73
EastLink Any part of EastLink south of Maroondah Hwy	\$2.58
EastLink One tunnel plus any part of EastLink south of Maroondah Hwy	\$5.29
EastLink Ringwood Bypass	No toll

This toll is to be paid by the driver in addition to the fare shown on the fare meter. Tolls can only be charged to passengers when the e-TAG is displayed in the vehicle. Prices are GST inclusive and are valid from 1 July 2015 to 30 June 2016. © 2015 CityLink and EastLink. All rights reserved. CityLink and EastLink are registered trademarks of Transurban Pty Ltd.

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ANIMAL TAXI & AMBULANCE

It was the winter of 1982 when Jan needed transportation for her dachshund (about to give birth to puppies).

As we should know, taxis are generally not allowed to carry animals in any passenger area of a taxi with the exception of registered assistance dogs. Assistance dogs are trained to sit in the front left wheel well of a taxi with their owner or carer sitting behind them.

That started it, Jan decided that animal owners needed a professional transport service and started the Petcabs service that was licensed by the Victorian Government in 1986.

Petcabs offers pet taxi and animal ambulance services throughout Melbourne and surrounding suburbs. Petcabs provide transport for passengers and their pets, or just pets, to requested destinations in Melbourne at very competitive prices and in comfortable safe vehicles with trained personnel.

Petcabs provide transportation to and from veterinary appointments, weddings, special events, airports, grooming salons, boarding kennels and catteries and much more.

The 'Animal Ambulance Service' was borne from the need of a specific fully equipped vehicle with trained ambulance and veterinary nursing personnel to provide reliable inter-veterinary hospital transport for ill animals.

Petcabs animal ambulance is a registered and insured ambulance extensively equipped with 'ALS' first aid equipment and medical oxygen, resuscitation equipment and patient lifting devices.

For more information regarding Petcabs visit their website at www.petcabs.com.au or call 1300 888 633. ✦



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GREEN TAXIS AT EUROVISION

All the stars at the Eurovision Song Contest (ESC) in Vienna were driven to the red carpet in the green taxis of taxi.eu.

Thanks to the taxi.eu shuttle service with almost 4,400 journeys, all 40 stars, delegations and 1,700 accredited journalists were able to be reliably transported to the large number of ESC events in an environmentally-friendly manner.

6 Tesla vehicles and another 114 environmentally friendly taxis had been provided with the official logo of taxi.eu and the branding of the ESC in preparation

for the Eurovision Song Contest. Its appearance was a real eye-catcher in the Viennese cityscape!

Australia's own Guy Sebastian took on Europe's finest and finished an impressive fifth at the 60th edition of the annual song competition, rocking the Wiener Stadthalle stadium in Vienna with his specially penned tune *Tonight Again*.

Tonight Again stormed to No. 2 in the Swedish iTunes chart, behind Eurovision victor Mans Zelmerlow's electro-pop ballad *Heroes* at No.1. ❖



DRIVER of the MONTH



John Antonopoulos has been driving for Silver Top Taxis for over 30 years. He likes to be with the public, talking and driving them. John prides himself on the neat and clean appearance both of himself and his car. ❖

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TAXI licences

\$278,300

average metro ASSIGNMENT

\$1,965

Taxi and Hire Car STATISTICS

2
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The table below shows taxi licence statistics at the end of June 2014 and for the most recent reporting period. The figures are updated and published on the Taxi Services Commission website each week. Figures shown consist of both active licences and those that have been approved but have not yet been operationalised at the time of reporting.

Taxi zone	Licence type	No. of licences at 29/6/14	No. of licences at 7/6/15	Change in no. of licences
Metro	Conventional	3,826	4,395	569
	WAT	504	489	-15
	Total	4,330	4,884	554
Urban	Conventional	357	400	43
	WAT	75	79	4
	Total	432	479	47
Regional	Conventional	253	261	8
	WAT	75	77	2
	Total	328	338	10
Country	Conventional	126	126	0
	WAT	36	34	-2
	Total	162	160	-2
Totals	Conventional	4,562	5,182	620
	WAT	690	679	-11
	Total	5,252	5,861	609

Number of drivers

Active drivers 15,654
Accredited drivers (taxi, hire car & bus).... 43,900

Compliance outcomes

Vehicle Inspections 682
Rectification Notices 101
Notices of Unroadworthiness 0
Infringement Notices 169
Official Warning notices 3
Regulation 19 notice 15

HIRE CAR LICENCES **\$35,600**

Number of Victorian Hire Vehicle Licences

Metropolitan Hire Cars 1,076
Country Hire Cars 58
Special Purpose Vehicles 954
Restricted Hire Cars 611
TOTAL **2,699**

The metro taxi licence average price of \$278,300 is based on the 10 genuine market based transactions that occurred in the metropolitan zone during May 2015.

The Taxi Services Commission's standard practice is to only count those licence transfers where a genuine market based transaction has occurred. They do this by applying a number of standard business rules. The aim of these business rules is to identify genuine market based transfers of taxi licences and to base average price calculations on these transactions only. Therefore, where it appears a non-market based licence transfer has occurred, these transactions are excluded in the calculation of licence values. An example is where a licence holder transfers the licence to a new business name but still retains ownership of the licence. ✚

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Healesville Sanctuary is proud to introduce their first Tasmanian Devil joeys for the season – to Katniss, a first time mum.

Katniss' joeys will stay with her until they are 10 months old, when they will leave her den to begin learning behaviours from other devils as well as how to socialise in preparation for their breeding years. The Tasmanian Devil faces extinction due to the Devil Facial Tumour Disease. ♣

**FAMILY
PASS**

Competition starts on 1 July 2015. The first three (3) correct entries received by Taxi Talk magazine, either via email or mail, on or after 1 July 2015 wins a Family Pass to Healesville Sanctuary.



WHY ARE
TASMANIAN DEVILS
FACING EXTINCTION?

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Oh what a feeling!



'Everyone has their own form of mindfulness, whether it's running, cooking or dancing' - Lucy Richards, Smiling Mind





WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

From the sole trader who can't sleep at night to the small business owner finding it hard to concentrate during the day, work-related stress manifests in many ways. But can setting aside a few minutes of quiet time a day combat this?

An increasing body of experts believe that we can by practicing mindfulness. A simple form of meditation, mindfulness can help lower stress, improve memory, boost the immune system and make it easier to fall asleep. It doesn't involve chanting or contorting into a yoga pose. It's about slowing down and becoming aware of your mind and body and its connection.

"Everyone has their own form of mindfulness, whether it's running, cooking or dancing," says Lucy Richards, general manager of Smiling Mind, a non-profit group based in Victoria that offers a free program built around this modern meditation.

HOW IT WORKS

Smiling Mind's program is available through its website (www.smilingmind.com.au) or can be accessed via an Apple or android app. It's a series of verbally guided meditations that are simple to follow and can be done at any time of the day when there's a few minutes to spare.

"The idea is that you don't have to have any experience, they're guided practices," says Lucy.

The introductory meditation lasts five minutes. A calm male voice talks through the process of breathing while being aware of various parts of the body, working up from the toes to the neck and face. It's about letting everything go and settling into the moment.

The aim is to listen to a 10-step course that's ideally done for a few minutes every day for 10 days. From there, users often do several sessions a week. Smiling Mind offers a range of programs, from a personal one to a corporate app that can be supplemented with face-to-face workshops in the office.

"The effects are fairly immediate and the more you do it the more sustained and long term they become," says Lucy.

CONFIDENCE BOOSTER

Ed Morgan started using the program more than a year ago while working as a service delivery manager at IBM. "I've always been interested in personal development and I was a little bit stressed at work," he says.

Ed followed a five-week program that involved logging on three times a week, ranging from three-minute "brain breaks" to 10- to 15-minute guided sessions. After a week, he started to see results.

"I felt a lot more calm at work and didn't react to situations as I would have in the past," said Ed.

Inspired, Ed applied for—and received—a World of Difference grant. The Vodaphone Foundation initiative funds a few people a year to work for the charity of their choice. He started working at Smiling Mind in the middle of 2014 as a program development manager.

Ed now practices mindfulness in the morning via the Smiling Mind corporate app for 10 to 15 minutes around three times a week.

"We're a really small team and mindfulness has really helped manage my workload," he says. "I can focus on one task at a time."

WHO CAN DO IT?

Large companies like IBM have signed on to Smiling Mind's program as well as smaller accounting firms. The corporate meditation is outcome driven, says Lucy, centred on calm, clarity and connection. "It's an investment in time to take three, five, 10 minutes to take care of yourself," she says. "After it you're so much clearer in your priorities and much more productive."

MINDFULNESS BENEFITS

By shutting down the system for a few minutes, turning off the primal "fight or flight" response, research has shown that meditation can:

- reduce stress by activating a relaxation response
- decrease pain by at least 33 per cent in some patients
- sharpen attention in the workplace within five days of practicing
- change the pathways in the brain that are connected to happiness, allowing for a greater sense happiness levels and increased emotional resilience. ❀



JAMES Holyman ac Taxi Services Commissi

INDUS U

The Taxi Services Commission Chair, Graeme Samuel, recently announced the appointment of our new Chief Executive Officer, Aaron De Rozario.

Mr De Rozario is currently General Manager of Passenger Services in the Department of Transport, Western Australia and has great exposure to national taxi issues through his membership of the National Taxi Regulators Group.

Please join me in welcoming our new CEO who will commence with us on 24 August 2015.

James Holyman

ting CEO

on

STRY PDATE

New regulations

The Taxi Services Commission (TSC) regulates the industry in accordance with various acts, regulations and other legislative instruments.

The Transport (Passenger Vehicles) Regulations 2005, Transport (Taxi-Cabs) Regulations 2005 and Transport (Taxi-Cab Licences – Market and Trading) Regulations 2005 are due to sunset on 28 June 2015 so the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR) and TSC have moved to:

- combine the two sets of regulations into just one so that they apply to both taxis and hire cars, and
- make some minor changes to reduce red tape.

The new regulations known as the Transport (Buses, Taxi-Cabs and Other Commercial Passenger Vehicles) Regulations 2005 came into effect on 15 June 2015 and is available online.

The focus of combining these regulations has been to remove redundant requirements that placed a burden on the industry.

The new regulations will be in place for 12 months.

During this time, the DEDJTR will undertake a full review of the regulations to assess their impact on the industry and service delivery to customers. ❀



The Taxi Services Commission is reverting back to using legislative terminology; **taxi booking services will revert to NETWORK SERVICE PROVIDERS** and

permit holders will revert to OPERATORS.

This aligns with current legislation.

TAXI CAB UPDATE

Dispute resolution

The Taxi Services Commission's Dispute Resolution Team has been in operation for 12 months. In this time, the team has dealt with almost 200 disputes between operators and drivers.

The majority of these matters related to a dispute over bond payments and the 55/45 pay split. Many of these disputes could have been resolved quickly and easily if both parties communicated in the first instance.



When you lodge a dispute with the TSC, the TSC will:

- encourage disputes to be resolved (where possible) among parties involved in the first instance
- allow all parties the right of reply
- be transparent by keeping all parties informed of the progress of their disputes throughout the process.

The TSC will assess the nature of the dispute and decide whether to:

- provide preliminary assistance or compliance action
- take compliance action, which may include issuing an Improvement Notice or taking disciplinary action against a person's accreditation.

If a taxi operator is found to have breached an implied condition (such as the 45/55 per cent operator/driver fare box split), the TSC may issue an Improvement Notice to the operator.

The Improvement Notice will outline the grounds for

concern and allow the operator 14 days to comply. Failure to comply with the Improvement Notice may result in a fine of \$738 and further compliance action.

If either party is found to have breached an implied condition, the TSC may also consider taking disciplinary action against that party's accreditation.

Disputes can be lodged via the feedback form on the TSC website. All parties must go through the TSC dispute resolution process before the dispute is referred to either:

- The Victorian Small Business Commissioner (VSBC) or
- The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).

The Taxi Services Commission has a number of commonly asked questions and answers on its website.

Please consider the responses to these questions before contacting the Dispute Resolution Team. ❀



All licence holders and operators must notify the Licensing Section of the TSC on 1800 638 802 or licensing@taxi.vic.gov.au of any changes pertaining to their licence/vehicle including changes to:

- postal and business address
- changes to NSP/depot provider

Please note changing your information with VicRoads such as your residential address for your driver accreditation will not change your business

Fees & penalties

The Victorian Government has a policy of automatically indexing certain fees and fines each year for inflation, so that the value of those fees and fines is maintained.

The Treasurer has now fixed the amount for a fee unit and a penalty unit for the financial year commencing 1 July 2015 as follows:

- the value of a fee unit is \$13.60
- the value of a penalty unit is \$151.67.

For example, currently breaching a licence condition relating to a commercial passenger vehicle incurs a penalty infringement notice of \$369 - from 1 July 2015 this will increase to \$379.

These rates were published in Special Gazette Number S86 dated 17 April 2015 and fees will be updated on the TSC website. ❀

Taxi tolls increase



It's that time of the year again and CityLink and EastLink taxi tolls will increase on 1 July 2015. New taxi toll stickers are available through metropolitan, outer suburban or other applicable network services providers.

Taxi operators are responsible for removing expired stickers and replacing these inside their vehicle. Drivers should also ensure that the new toll stickers are on display and that these charges are explained/applied to passengers when applicable. ❀



The Taxi Services Commission (TSC) is pleased to report a significant increase in the number of drivers who are passing the Knowledge test.

The TSC would like to congratulate the industry, in particular drivers, for listening to advice and taking the time to prepare before taking the test by using tools such as the Knowledge handbook.

As of 5 June 2015, 1349 drivers have attained the Knowledge. Metro drivers should now be displaying the decal pictures in their taxis to show the public that they have attained the Knowledge. ❀

Keep valuables secure



There has been an increase in the theft of drivers' mobile phones and wallets from the centre console of taxis, by passengers or other parties. This can easily be avoided.

Drivers are reminded to keep their valuables secure at all times and not readily accessible or visible to other persons.

Any crime committed against you should be reported to Victoria Police as soon as possible. ❀

HIRE CAR UPDATE

Compliance at Melbourne Airport

As the regulator of the Taxi and Hire Car Industry, the Taxi Services Commission (TSC) is responsible for ensuring that those operating are doing so within the confines of the law.

For the period 19 May 2015 – 31 May 2015, the TSC issued 164 Penalty Infringement Notices to drivers at Melbourne Airport.



The infringements issued were for a variety of offences including unauthorised operating, driving a commercial passenger vehicle without accreditation and operating outside licence conditions.

The TSC is continuing its operations to ensure that those operating taxis and hire cars are doing so legally. ❖

Engagement Forums

The Taxi Services Commission receives calls from a number of hire car industry participants wanting to know what is happening on a variety of issues.

As well as referring to their website, the following groups and associations can provide insight into what happens at our engagement forums.

The Government has established a Ministerial Taxi and Hire Car Forum, which met for the first time in April this year.

There is a sub group of the Ministerial Forum which is working on a range of options for ride-sharing for the Minister's consideration.

In addition the Taxi Services Commission has a stakeholder reference group (SRG) which provides input into the implementation of the reform agenda. More details of membership and minutes on their website.

The parties who represent the interests of the hire car industry are:

- Victorian Hire Car Association (VHCA)
- Sam Ozluk
- Victorian Country Limousine Association
- Victorian Taxi and Hire Car Families

All these parties are represented at the Ministerial Forum and three of them are on the SRG. So please contact them if you have queries. ❖

Licence encumbrances

Financial institutions sometimes notify the Taxi Services Commission (TSC) of their interest in a taxi-cab or hire car licence and request that their interest be noted as an encumbrance against the relevant licence.

Effective from 1 June 2015, the TSC no longer accepts requests

to note encumbrances on taxi-cab or hire car licences.

A third party wishing to purchase a licence is responsible for confirming whether or not the taxi-cab or hire car licence is subject to an encumbrance (including a mortgage, charge, lien or trust).

This should include confirming that the licence is free of any such encumbrance at the time of settlement.

Transfer forms have been updated to reflect this change. The TSC wrote to financial institutions in March 2015 to advise of this change. ❖

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world news



South Korea

South Korea to ban taxi services by private drivers

South Korean lawmakers passed a bill on May 29, 2015 to ban taxi services provided by private drivers, marking what is likely the first nationwide legislation to outlaw Uber Technologies Inc's low-cost uberX service.

The ban, which will take effect by the year-end, marks the latest setback for the U.S. company. Though the firm has expanded rapidly and commands a valuation of around \$40 billion, its business practice of matching passengers with private drivers without a taxi licence has triggered legal and regulatory battles across the globe.

"Uber respects this decision by the National Assembly and looks forward to continuing its conversations with Seoul City on how to best serve



Seoul and its citizens within the legal framework allowed by Korean Law," the U.S. company said in a statement to Reuters ahead of the floor vote.

While the legislation, which amends an existing law on transportation services, imposes a blanket ban rather than explicitly mentioning Uber, it was pushed by lawmakers to block uberX. The bill also bans any parties from offering services that match passengers with drivers without a taxi licence.

The move may be largely symbolic, however: Uber suspended its uberX service in Seoul in March following a backlash from authorities and taxi unions, and local competitors match riders with taxi drivers only.

Uber founder and Chief Executive Travis Kalanick, as well as the Korean subsidiary, were indicted by local prosecutors in December, while the Transport Ministry rejected Uber's February proposal to create a separate registration system for its drivers.

The company faces regulatory scrutiny elsewhere: an Italian court in May has banned Uber's uberPOP service and others that match private drivers with passengers, adding to a growing list of challenges it faces in Europe.

Authorities in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou also raided the U.S. firm's local office on suspicion of "unlicensed operation."

The firm also pulled out of Kansas after the state's lawmakers pushed through a bill imposing stricter regulations.

Uber still offers two services in South Korea: uberTaxi, which matches users with licensed taxi drivers, and the upscale UberBLACK service that can only be used by certain types of passengers including those with disabilities, foreigners, or people 65 and older based on local rules.

Reuters ❖

China

China's Weibo to invest \$142m in taxi hailing apps



Chinese microblog Weibo Corp will invest \$142 million in China's dominant taxi-hailing firms Didi Taxi and Kuaidi Taxi.

Didi Taxi and Kuaidi Taxi, the two leading taxi apps in China, merged in February to create Didi Kuaidi -- the world's largest smartphone-based transport service which was valued at roughly \$6 billion according to a person familiar with the deal.

A spokesman for Weibo said the investment went into the merged company. Didi Kuaidi declined to comment.

Weibo, controlled by Web portal company Sina Corp, has become China's water cooler, where nearly 600 million Internet users discuss everything from Korean soap operas to China's politics.

Like many other Internet firms, the company -- with around 200 million monthly active users -- has to operate in a heavily censored and tightly controlled media environment in China.

Didi Kuaidi operates in 360 cities in China and has 1.35 million drivers.

Its premium car service is available in 61 cities with 400,000 drivers. Daily calls for taxis have hit 4 million per day, while premium cars are ordered 1.5 million times a day.

Reuters ❀

Fixed airport fares for Paris taxis

As part of the French government's efforts to modernize taxi services and make them more attractive fixed airport fares will apply from March 1, 2016 to direct journeys between the airports and the capital. Four fares will be set, between each airport and the right or left bank of the Seine.

For taxi bookings, the call-out fee will also be fixed for all journeys beginning in Paris. The amount will differ according to whether it is an immediate or advance booking.

The opening of lanes reserved for taxis and public transport on the A1 motorway on April 29, 2015 and the A6 motorway on June 3, 2015 is intended to cut down journey times at peak times on routes between the airports and Paris.

Fixing fares and cutting down journey times will promote the use of taxi services for tourists and regular customers. ❀

New York taxis to have black boxes data recorders

The black boxes will record data including speed, acceleration, braking and other unsafe driving factors.

The pilot program comes as part of New York City's Mayor de Blasio's highly touted Vision Zero initiative, which has a mission of eliminating traffic fatalities.

"The data collected by this piloted technology will help our industries reinforce good driving practices that will ultimately keep drivers, passengers, pedestrians and cyclists as safe as possible," TLC commissioner Meera Joshi said in a statement.

For now, the technology has been installed in ten vehicles, including Yellow Cabs, Boro Taxis and private for-hire vehicles. ❀

world news



California

Uber driver is an employee

A driver for Uber is an employee, not a contractor, according to a California ruling that eventually could push up costs for the smartphone-based ride hailing service and hurt the closely watched start-up's valuation.

The California Labor Commissioner's decision could ripple through the burgeoning industry of providing services via smartphones, with potential implications for other "crowdsourced" services such as Uber rival Lyft, chore service TaskRabbit, and cleaning service Homejoy.

The ruling - which Uber insisted applied to only one driver in California - was the latest in a series of legal and regulatory challenges facing the company and other highly valued start-ups in the United States and other countries.

Classifying Uber drivers as employees could mean considerably higher costs for the company, including Social Security, workers' compensation and unemployment insurance.

That in turn could affect its valuation, currently above \$40 billion, and the valuation of other companies that rely on large networks of individuals to provide rides, clean houses and other services.

Because it is appealing, Uber will not have to change the way it does business, for now.

Uber said in a statement that officials in five other states have found that its drivers are independent contractors.

And in 2012, the same California commissioner found that another Uber driver was an independent contractor, citing evidence such as the ability of the driver to determine his own hours.

But in this case, where the commissioner appeared to have considered a broader range of factors, officials found Uber is "involved in every aspect of the operation."

Uber, however, touted driver autonomy.

"The number one reason drivers choose to use Uber is because they have complete flexibility and control," the company said in a statement. "The majority of them can and do choose to earn their living from multiple sources, including other ride sharing companies."

But the commissioner said Uber controls the tools drivers use, monitors their approval ratings and terminates their access to the system if their ratings fall below 4.6 stars.

Although the ruling affects only California, the state is Uber's home base, one of its largest markets, and sets a path often followed by regulators and courts in other states.

In another case earlier this month, Uber lost a bid to force arbitration in a federal lawsuit brought in San Francisco by its drivers. Earlier this year, the same U.S. District Court rejected Uber's bid to classify its drivers as independent contractors, saying a jury would rule on their status.

In Florida, a state agency ruled earlier this year that Uber drivers are employees.

Reuters ❖



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AUSTRALIA'S 2015 BEST DRIVER'S CAR



FIRST PLACE: It doesn't always follow that vehicles universally praised overseas translate their abilities to the real world Down Under. But in the Cayman GTS, the added power and braking and the chassis magic weaved by Porsche's best boffins, proves as effective and infectious in Australia as our initial European drives suggested.



SECOND PLACE: The Mercedes-AMG A 45 has made a big splash in the Australian market since launching here just under two years ago. The 265kW turbocharged four-cylinder ensured the A 45's place in history before the ultra-quick, all-wheel drive hatchback even arrived in this country. But while AMG's first four-cylinder engine defines the A 45, the story doesn't end there. High-calibre brakes, suspension and driving aids are a match for the A 45's towering performance potential.

It's official: Porsche's Cayman GTS is Australia's Best Driver's Car. The mid-engined two-seat \$160,900 coupe has topped a field of 15 cars priced between \$25,000 and \$250,000 to take out the honour, awarded by motoring.com.au.

It's the first time the Australia's Best Driver's Car has been awarded and follows exhaustive testing by Australia's number one automotive editorial network.

motoring.com.au assembled more than \$1.5m worth of vehicles for Australia's Best Driver's Car and travelled to Australia's best driving roads in Tasmania to conduct the testing.

In addition to road drives, Australia Best Driver's Car included race-

track and dragstrip performance testing.

motoring.com.au Editor-in-Chief, Mike Sinclair, said while the inaugural Australia's Best Driver's Car was hard fought, in the final reckoning the decision was unanimous.

"The Cayman GTS was rated higher across Australia's Best Driver's Car eight key engagement categories than any of the other 14 cars we tested," Sinclair stated.

"In fact, every judge who scored the GTS gave it at least six five out of fives. In scoring terms, that's a remarkable result -- no other car came close," he said.

"Driver's cars are hard to quantify in terms of hard data – the factors

that separate them from A-to-Bs cars are more than just acceleration times or power to weight ratios. But if you have even an ounce of petrol in your veins, you'll pick them after just a few minutes behind the wheel," motoring.com.au's Sinclair stated.

"This is no better illustrated than by the Cayman GTS. Tactile, communicative and eager, in the best tradition of great driver's cars, even in Tasmania's wildest weather the inner brilliance of the GTS shone through," he added.

motoring.com.au is the editorial arm of carsales.com Ltd. It attracts more than 1.0m visitors and serves over 5.3m editorial pages across the carsales.com.au network of automotive websites each month. ♣

THIRD PLACE:

Jaguar's fist bona-fide sports car since the legendary E-Type might have been a long time coming, but it lives up to the hype with sensuous styling, a solid chassis and a bruising British blown V8 that slams down bulk torque and a hairy-chested, NASCAR-like rumble at full noise. But far from its lithe ancestor, the big cat is the most expensive and thirstiest of the 15 vehicles in Australia's Best Driver's Car, and one of the heaviest.



HAVE YOU SEEN THESE MEN?

If you know something, say something!

Report information confidentially online at www.crimestoppersvic.com.au or call Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

This man was seen following people and changing train carriages on the Werribee line train between Seddon and Laverton, on Wednesday 27 May between 5 - 6pm.

He made rude remarks and touched himself in the presence of a child and teenager.

He is believed aged in his late 40s to 50s, greying hair and was wearing a black jacket and a Monster energy drink t-shirt.

(Reference number: CSV201) ❀



This man attempted to rob a service station in Blackburn armed with a large machete on 25 May 2015.

The attendant hid in the bathrooms when the man entered the store on Blackburn Road at about 7am.

The man and two accomplices escaped empty handed in a silver Toyota Corolla Ascent hatch bearing registration plates ZOW862. The plates were stolen earlier that morning.

He was wearing black pants and a jumper and was covering his face with a dark head scarf.

(Ref number: CSV0195) ❀

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Major Events

Until 12 July		SHIFTING GEAR: DESIGN, INNOVATION AND THE AUSTRALIAN CAR - From steam-powered horseless carriages and the classic Aussie ute to muscle cars, racy V8s and dazzling concept vehicles, Australia has a rich legacy of innovative car design. National Gallery of Victoria celebrates this history with an exhibition of cars.	The Ian Potter Centre NGV Australia 1 Swanston Street Melbourne
29 June to 5 July		AUSTRALIA SNOOKER GOLDFIELDS OPEN - Play will consist of the top 16 world ranked players plus 16 qualifiers. The event will showcase the beautiful and historic Goldfields region through a global broadcast to across 60 countries including China and the United Kingdom.	Bendigo Stadium, 134 Marong Road, West Bendigo,
3 - 31 July		INNER BEAT PROJECTED - The complex identities of young African emerging artists will be explored in a series of dramatic art installations. Visitors watch them breathe and change position in slow motion. While they watch, they are invited into their inner world through a spoken word piece written by each sleeper and a musical soundscape.	Forecourt and Hamer Hall terrace Arts Centre Melbourne
16 July to 1 Nov		DAVID BOWIE IS - Featuring over 50 legendary costumes, original stage set designs, handwritten lyric sheets, album artwork, rare film, video and photographs and interviews with collaborators, the exhibition showcases Bowie's impact as a live performer and screen star.	ACMI, Flinders Street Melbourne
18 - 24 July		2015 INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONS CUP - The competition will feature three of the best football teams in the world; Real Madrid CF, Manchester City FC and AS Roma. The opening match is between Real Madrid and Italian super club AS Roma. Melbourne City's sister club, Manchester City, will face off against AS Roma in the second match. The final match will see Real Madrid go head to head with Manchester City in one of the largest football matches ever played outside of Europe.	MCG, Yarra Park Jolimont
24 - 26 July		WINTER BLUES FESTIVAL - Visitors to this much loved festival can soak up the blues and roots atmosphere from every street corner, restaurants and bars. This year's 15th annual festival was the largest to date with 80+ blues artists filling 50 venues across Echuca Moama. The fact that the vast majority of the blues and roots music is free is still a major drawcard for the festival.	High Street Echuca
25 - 26 July		OPEN HOUSE MELBOURNE - If you love your city and its architecture, history and design, you'll love Open House Melbourne. You'll gain access to buildings not normally open to the public and get a sense of their history.	various venues in and around Melbourne
26 July		THE AGE RUN MELBOURNE - is more than just a "fun run". For many participants, it is an opportunity to give back to the community by raising funds for a cause close to their hearts. It is a great way to promote healthy living and fitness.	Federation Square Corner of Swanston & Flinders Streets Melbourne
30 July to 16 Aug		MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL - is an iconic Melbourne event with a devoted audience. MIFF hosts a feast of cinematic delicacies from over 50 countries.	Various venues in and around Melbourne



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Melbourne



Street	Dates	Details	Purpose
Dorcas and Wells Streets Southbank	Until to 31 July 9am to 4pm weekdays 7am to 5pm weekends	Closures and traffic detours at roundabout intersection . Detours via St Kilda Road, Coventry Street, Kings Way and Bank Street.	Road resurfacing works
Punt Road South Yarra	Until 30 September 8pm to 6am	Full closure of carriageway, alternating between northbound and southbound, between Toorak and Commercial Roads	Water main renewal works
Punt Road South Yarra	Until 1 September 8.30pm to 6am	Full closure of northbound carriageway between Domain Road and Alexandra Avenue.	Water main renewal works
St Kilda Road Southbank and South Melbourne	12am Saturday 4 to 5am Thursday 9 July	Fulltime closure of centre carriageways (both directions) between Southbank Boulevard/Linlithgow Avenue and Park Street, including closure of all pedestrian crossing points.	Tram Track and DDA Platform Construction
Flinders Street Melbourne	18 to 25 July 12midnight to 5am	Fulltime closure of carriageway (both directions) between west of Spring Street and west of Russell Street, including closure at intersections of Russell and Exhibition Streets.	Tram Track Renewal Works
Katherine Place Melbourne	Until 5 July 10am to 6pm Sundays	Full closure between Flinders Street and Flinders Lane.	Signage maintenance works
Catherine Street Southbank	Until 4 July 7am to 7pm weekdays 8am to 3pm Saturdays	Full closure of carriageway (both directions) between Clarke Street and Moray Street	Concrete pour
Market Lane Melbourne	Until 13 July 7:30am to 3pm	Full closure between Bourke Street and Little Bourke Street.	Water Utility Works
Princes and Nicholson Streets Carlton	Until 21 July 6:30pm to 5:30am	Closures and traffic detours at intersection. Northbound traffic on Nicholson Street must turn into Princes Street.	Road asphaltting works
Waratah Place Melbourne	Until 22 September Waratah Place 7am to 5pm Lonsdale Street 9:30am to 3:30pm	Full closure of laneway between Lonsdale Street and Little Bourke Street. Partial closure on the Lonsdale Street westbound carriageway between Russell Street and Waratah Place.	Power Utility Works
Punt Road and Domain Road South Yarra	Until 30 September 10pm to 6am	Closures and detours at intersection. Traffic on Domain Road will require to detour via Toorak Road West. Traffic on Punt Road will contra-flow on the northbound carriageway.	Water main renewal works
Franklin Street Melbourne	4 and 5 July 7am to 7pm	Full closure of westbound carriageway between Swanston Street and Elizabeth Street.	Crane lift to install overhead gantry
Little Lonsdale Street Melbourne	4 and 5 July 2015	Full closure of Little Lonsdale Street, between Spencer Street and King Street	Tower crane installation

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REFERENCES

Melbourne



1 - 5 June	AMPLIFY FESTIVAL Today's best thinkers. Tomorrow's business. Amplify Festival explores emerging trends and disruptive technology. Featuring 40+ of the world's best thinkers in talks, workshops, breakfasts and more	Daryl Mackay Auditorium 750 Collins Street, Docklands
1 - 3 July	28TH ANNUAL SEANZ CONFERENCE This conference is for researchers, educators, government agency representatives, small business owner-managers, their professional advisors and students. It will focus on the theory and practice of managing SMEs in today's challenging business environment.	NAB "The Village", 700 Bourke Street Docklands, Melbourne
16 - 19 July	DECOR AND DESIGN MEL / 15 Australia's premier interior event showcasing the latest interior products and furnishings from leading companies	Melbourne Exhibition Centre 1 Convention Place Melbourne
16 - 19 July	AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL FURNITURE FAIR Australia's largest trade only furniture event and will unveil the latest in furniture designs for commercial, residential and retail industry.	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre 1 Convention Place Melbourne
27 - 29 July	YAPANEYEPUK - WALKING TOGETHER TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE This gathering in Melbourne will contribute to new partnerships and improved outcomes whilst showcasing the importance of the connection between culture, wellbeing, social and economic wellbeing. These connections will be explored with the experience of a global group of First Nations educators through the lens of key Aboriginal values.	The Pullman 65 Queens Road Albert Park
28 - 30 July	4TH ANNUAL NATIONAL LEADERSHIP PSYCHOLOGY SUMMIT 2015 This event will provide delegates with deep practical insights from leading practitioners and experts, offering a range of evidence-based tools to assess, plan and develop the performance of all levels of leadership	Crowne Plaza Melbourne 1 Spencer Street Melbourne
29 - 30 July	AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY WORKERS CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION Bringing together a faculty of prominent industry experts, providing in-depth insights for community work practitioners and their companies into the fields of organisational, community and professional development.	Pullman Melbourne on the Park 192 Wellington Parade Melbourne
29 July	STRATEGY FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENT GROWTH How can Unis drive growth for international students? This conference provides a forum for discussion on how to tackle the above and the way forward in this increasingly competitive landscape.	Victoria University Flinders Street Melbourne

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