

TAXI TALK

VOICE OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

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ON THE RANKS SINCE 1966

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EDITOR'S DESK



ON THE RANKS SINCE 1966

Proudly published in
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In New South Wales the government is embracing the “collaborative economy” and is in the process of drafting regulation for same. Some of the businesses that are included in the collaborative economy are Uber, Airbnb, Kickstarter, Ebay, Gumtree and Airtasker.

NSW Innovation Minister Victor Dominello says digital innovation is “transforming the way people do business in every city and every country around the world. The reality is the collaborative economy is here to stay.”

“We are living in the information age and it is vital that government policies embrace new technologies and enable businesses to operate with certainty,” he said.

So, what is the Victorian government doing about the collaborate/sharing economy? Are they going to embrace it as NSW has or just continue to sit on their hands and wait for something to miraculously happen?

Have you ever tried to get your taxi or hire car insured via a regular mainstream insurer? Well, it just doesn't work - you can complete the online application form or talk with a consultant and once you say that the car is used to transport people - they both say “sorry - we do not insure these vehicles”.

Apparently there are some brokers who will handle your insurance - but these are few and far between. So, it's to the Taxi Clubs that you must go to get your taxi vehicle insurance. There are plenty of them in Victoria, so shop around and find the one that best suits you.

The latest loss for the Victorian taxi industry is the sale of Frankston Radio Cabs to Silver Top Taxi Service. Frankston Radio Cabs had been operating in the Frankston area for over 65 years, but technology innovation and cost increases forced them to look to a major company for support. They will still be operating from Milne Avenue, Frankston - just not as Frankston Radio Cabs.

San Francisco's largest taxi company, Yellow Cabs has filed for bankruptcy. The company is in serious financial trouble primarily due to competition from ride-hailing apps, Uber and Lyft. Many people are using Uber and Lyft in preference to taxis.

“On an annual basis over 5 million passengers are transported

in Yellow Cabs,” Yellow Cab President Pamela Martinez wrote in a letter to shareholders last month. “We used to have more and our goal is to get them back and even more.”

Many taxi companies, operators, regulators and interested parties have lobbied for legislation to protect themselves from Uber, but the ride-hailing app giant, currently valued at US\$62.5 million, is hard to beat.


Also, for the first time ever, a car service has been permitted to service Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California where this year's Super Bowl (USA National Football League championship game) is being played. It is none other than Uber!

The ride-hailing company effectively bought exclusive rights to the Super Bowl. Uber is providing around

US\$500,000 to sponsor the Super Bowl Host Committee, which co-ordinates the transportation for the game. And as part of its exclusive deal, Lyft, taxis and other car services won't be let into the stadium area. Isn't it amazing what a little money can do?

The Taxi Services Commission recently released an updated look at the industry's Customer Charter. It is imperative that all taxi drivers adhere to this charter. If the drivers (and their taxis) are providing exemplary service to the travelling public, there will be little need for the passengers to look elsewhere for transportation.

Toni Peters

Editor, Taxi Talk - Voice of the Taxi Industry 



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CHALLENGES IN 2016 AND BEYOND

One of the very old challenges for the industry was at long last removed by the action of the Andrews Government.

For many years the taxi industry has been used as a scapegoat when New Year's Eve revellers were left in the city trying to get transport home.

It has always been an impossible task for the taxi industry to take one hundred thousand people out of the city between midnight and five in the morning. The taxi industry was never meant to be used as mass transport.

However, this did not stop the media and governments from blaming the industry and over-supplying the market with additional taxis.

The industry can only hope that the government will be successful in running public transport for 24 hours in the future.

The challenges presented by the continuous unlawful operation of Uber, has not gone away. However the surge pricing used by Uber, on New Year's Eve, has shown that you can always get transport home, as long as you have a big, fat wallet.

The Victorian Minister of Transport, Jacinta Allen and the Andrews Government have to be congratulated for taking their time and not letting themselves be bullied into changing our laws simply to accommodate an American company, but instead consider carefully under which regulations they would allow Uber to operate.

In the meantime we need to bring the taxi industry's case to the attention of

the public and our politicians, whilst giving the best possible service to the public.

We face many more challenges in the future. Some of these have to be addressed in the near future and others will become obvious as time goes on.

If we want the taxi industry to survive we have to realise that the industry has to act primarily in the interest of the public.

Many in the industry have lost track of this and too many times self-interest is put before the interest of the public. Laws and regulations were, and should always be, made primarily in the interest of the public and at the same time provide certainty and viability to the service providers.

The competition argument is and will be one of the most challenging for the industry. It is used to cover up all kinds of self-interest by all kinds of individuals, companies and governments.

The taxi driver will use it to justify when he "bottles" a radio job. The radio networks use it when they entice operators or contracts from each other.

Taxi operators use it to justify when they "steal" drivers off each other



and government uses it to justify their money making involvement in the industry.

We have to look closely at the competition in the taxi industry to find out if it helps or hinders the interest of the most important party, the public.

If we define the interest of the public in more detail it should help us to see which part of competition is in the public interest and which is not.

It is in the interest of the general public that the industry provides a safe, reliable, professional and friendly point to point transport at the cheapest possible price.

So, where does competition help or hinder the interest of the public?

It is easy to see that competition between drivers or operators has little or no effect on the interest of the public.

Competition between the radio networks looks to be a good thing because the taxi-user can use the

Network Service Provider Service of his choice.

One service might answer the phone quicker, be more helpful, or friendlier than the other.

However the taxi-user is primarily interested in getting a taxi for transportation from point to point and is in the majority of cases not interested in which network provides the taxi.

In fact, in this case, competition between networks works against the interest of the taxi-user. He only has access to those taxis that are affiliated with the Network Service Provider of his choice and not all available taxis.

It is in the public's interest that the networks or the government work together to find a solution that gives the public access to ALL available taxis in Melbourne.

The Victorian government decided to compete with perpetual licence holders in the market of leasing taxi licences.

A lot can be said on this subject and there should be an in depth discussion on why and to what extent governments should be involved.

However, one can see all around the world that an unlimited supply of taxis will invariably lead to an increase in price for the consumer and a decrease in overall service. This is therefore not in the public interest.

Let's hope that the all facets of the Victorian taxi industry will work together and with the help of the government, survive the present crisis so that the Victorian public will once again have a world class taxi service that we can all be proud of.

Hans Altoff
Taxi Owner/ Operator 

MONEY FOR HARDSHIP

There's still time to apply for the Taxi Reform Hardship Fund before applications close on 12 February 2016.

The fund was established to assist perpetual taxi licence owners who may be experiencing severe financial distress as a result of reforms following the 2012 Taxi Industry Inquiry.

Perpetual taxi licence owners who meet the following criteria may be eligible for payments from the fund.

Persons who had an ownership interest in a taxi licence between 28 March 2011 and 1 July 2013 and as a direct result of the Taxi Industry Inquiry and subsequent reforms are currently experiencing both:

- A deficiency in income that would not allow provision for either themselves or their immediate family the necessities of food, shelter, clothing, medical expenses, education for children and other basic requirements; and
- An inability to liquidate assets in order to either meet the costs of those necessities outlined above or to pay outstanding debts as and when they fall due.

To establish if an applicant meets this criteria, applications will be means tested and assessed against a set of guidelines supporting the criteria outlined above.

The Chair and auditing team will determine payment amounts for eligible applicants once applications for the fund close.

For more information about the fund, or to download the application form visit the Taxi Reform Hardship Fund website - <http://economicdevelopment.vic.gov.au> and search for taxi reform hardship.

Applications close at 5pm on Friday, 12 February 2016. **TT**



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TOLL CHEATS GET NABBED

The Sheriffs are out on the roads catching those who try to avoid the toll fees.

Police, the Taxi Services Commission and the Sheriff's Office are getting operations in place to catch up with toll cheats.

They will use GPS and number-plate recognition technology to locate them.

A toll invoice must be paid by the due date otherwise you will be issued a Final Toll Invoice with additional administration charges.

When the Final Toll Invoice remains

unpaid, you will receive an Infringement Notice from Victoria Police for \$148 for every day of travel. Next is a letter from the Sheriff's Office.

Once the Sheriff's Office becomes involved you need to take immediate action to resolve your matters.

The Sheriff's Officers are authorised to clamp your vehicle's wheel, suspend your driver's licence and vehicle registration, seize and sell your personal property and arrest you. **TT**



3.67 million unpaid toll fines =
ALMOST \$ 1 BILLION UNPAID FINES

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\$616 million unpaid

EastLink

\$363 million unpaid

Taxi Drivers

129,563 fines unpaid

\$35 million unpaid

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WORLD TAXI NEWS

SINGAPORE

ComfortDelGro, a Singapore-based multinational land transport company, operates 46,500 vehicles in seven countries and manages the largest taxi fleet in Singapore with some 17,000 taxis.

ComfortDelGro is the first taxi company in Singapore to accept MasterPass.

Mr Yang Ban Seng, CEO of ComfortDelGro Taxis, said: "MasterPass is a service initiative to provide our customers with a seamless and hassle free ride in our taxis."

"They just need to book our taxis using MasterPass, hop into our cab and get off at their destination without any fare transaction. Our drivers will also like it because there's no fiddling of notes and coins and no dipping of cards – it really does save both customers and cabbies valuable time." **TT**

JAKARTA

Ojek are a traditional form of transportation in Jakarta. Given the city's infamous congestion, ojek can be found on every street corner of the capital, although their existence has no legal basis.

For years, ojek have been considered an alternative type of public transportation for people who like to reach their destination without spending hours stuck in traffic, but now the game has completely changed.

The rising popularity of the two biggest players in the app-based ojek business, Go-Jek and Grab-Bike, has made the two-wheeled taxi a favorite mode of public transportation among middle-class Jakartans.

Taxi companies Blue Bird and Express have also voiced their objection, as their drivers reported dropping income since the advent of the app-based ojek.

Indra Budiari **TT**

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NEW YORK STATE

A taxi ride from the Buffalo Niagara International Airport to City Hall downtown typically costs at least \$39. If Uber or another ride-booking service were operating in Buffalo, the same ride could cost less than \$20.

That's why Uber has become a national, even international, rage. Uber drivers are picking up passengers in every large American city, but not Buffalo – now the largest city in the nation without Uber.

Why not Buffalo? The answer can be found 288 miles to the east, in Albany.

Ride-hailing services, which use mobile apps to connect passengers and drivers, are not permitted in New York State, except in New York City, under a special arrangement.

"I think there's a very strong possibility that Uber will be accepted statewide," State Sen. Timothy M. Kennedy said. "I think there's a growing desire to have Uber in New York State. I think it's gaining traction and momentum."

But getting through the Legislature will be difficult. Taxicab and

limo companies, cabbies and many disabled people are lined up against the service.

These opponents say it would threaten the taxicab industry, costing at least 1,330 jobs in the Buffalo area alone, especially among support personnel such as dispatchers and mechanics.

Opponents also say it would limit transportation options for the disabled. And they claim Uber would rely unfairly on independent-contractor drivers not subject to workers' compensation, unemployment benefits and payroll withholdings.

"We're not afraid of competition," said Kevin Barwell of Buffalo, president of the Limousine, Bus, Taxi Operators of Upstate New York. "If they want to come in and compete, fine, if they're on the same playing field."

Supporters counter that Uber, which operates in 45 states, would provide flexible, part-time driving jobs for people needing extra income; increase access to small businesses; make communities safer by reducing drunken driving; serve underserved areas; and reduce discrimination against passengers living in tough neighborhoods.

Gene Warner 



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COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION

With the bushfire season well and truly underway, Victoria Police is ramping up patrols to detect bushfire arson and prevent the destruction it can have on communities.

This summer, police will reactivate Operation Firesetter to detect and prevent bushfire arson in high-risk locations and times.

The operation is a state-wide initiative activated on severe, extreme or code red days.

Deputy Commissioner Andrew Crisp said the operation was about taking action to catch arsonists before their criminal behaviour has devastating consequences.

"We've already seen serious fires in some areas of the state. It's more important than ever to remain vigilant and report suspicious behaviour to Crime Stoppers," DC Crisp said.

But it's not just arsonists who provide a safety risk to the community.

Recklessly caused fires are often viewed by the community as accidental. In reality, the potential for injury, loss of life, property damage and drain on resources is the same as that caused by arson.

"Something like failing to properly extinguish a campfire, using machinery or angle grinders on a total fire ban day, or flicking a cigarette butt into grass is a recipe for disaster," DC Crisp said.

"We want people to be mindful of their activities during fire danger periods. Know the restrictions and be accountable to them."

Victoria Police is asking the community to help prevent deliberately and accidentally lit fires to keep Victoria safe this summer. **TT**



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The Victorian Taxi & Hire Car Families

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105 Normanby Road, North Caulfield

Ring Leo any time on
0409 562 531



**Unity will
achieve our
goal**



How you can help

- Be mindful of your activities during fire danger periods. Know the restrictions and be accountable to them.
- If you believe a person, or vehicle, is behaving in a suspicious manner write down the details. If you record the details straight away the more accurate they are likely to be, and the more helpful the information will be to police.
- If you are suspicious of a person or a vehicle, write down as much detailed information as possible.
- If a fire affects your neighbourhood, try to:
 - Note the description of any people who have entered or left the scene before the fire started.
 - Note the description of any vehicles entering or leaving the scene before the fire started
 - Note any activity in the area prior to the fire starting, such as camping, firewood collecting, bushwalkers etc.
 - Remember the time and location where you first observed the fire.

If you see smoke or fire, call Triple Zero ('000') immediately. If you have difficulty speaking English, you can ask for an interpreter once you have been transferred to the emergency service you requested

If you see something suspicious, report the behaviour by calling Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or visiting www.crimestoppersvic.com.au.

HAVE YOUR SAY

OLD FASHIONED TAXI SERVICE IS NEEDED

My husband and I have some taxi licences (which he bought from his father) and like most owners, we are very concerned about Uber and UberX as real threats to our livelihood.

I was recently in Cabrini Hospital and on my discharge was asked if I wanted a taxi. I told them I was being picked up by my son.

I sat for at least 30 minutes at the entrance of Cabrini and watched as numerous Yellow Cabs drove in to pick up their passengers.

Not one of the drivers got out of their seat to open the door for the passengers - most of whom were old and frail.

Then a Silver Service cab arrived. The driver promptly got out of his car, gave his passenger their seat belt then shut the door.

I think that old-fashioned courtesy would help the taxi industry enormously.

Patricia Munro 



ACE DRIVER

I had reason to hail a cab in Melbourne city just recently and I wish to report that the driver was spotlessly clean, very, very courteous, and his taxi was impeccable.

His identification Number was 539630 – 13Cabs. This driver is an absolute credit to himself and the industry. How do we get more drivers like him?

Barbara J. Richardson 



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Please include your name and full contact details for verification.

vale

Malcolm John Hocking

29/8/1935 - 28/12/2015

Taxi driver, dad and friend. Mal loved taxi driving - he loved every day of it. At 80 years of age he was still working full time. When he was told he was unable to work anymore there were tears in his eyes.

I never heard him come home and complain about his day the way some people do. He served his community for 50 years and on his days off drove for Eastern Volunteers.


He was more than a taxi driver to many of his passengers. He was

their lifeline. He was their way to see their late partner at a cemetery every week, he was their way to safely get to rehabilitation, he was the way elderly customers made it to the shops each week without feeling intimidated or worried.

He would spend hours sorting out rides for people if he couldn't do it, making sure they had a reliable driver and that they would be cared for. It was never a chore and he would recount stories of their personal tri-

umphs to us as he had the same passengers for years at a time. His eyes welling up when he thought about their strength and bravery. He loved people and people loved him

His signature greeting when you called him on the phone "Hello Mal Hocking, how can I help you" was much loved and relied upon by many in the community. He will be sadly missed.

Sarah Hocking, daughter 

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Oh what a feeling!

WORKERS RIGHTS DOWNED

The so-called disruptive economy is bringing in “digital work choices” by stealth as companies such as Uber drive down workers’ rights, TWU National Secretary Tony Sheldon has warned.

Disruptive tech firms should be forced to work with governments and the community to ensure decent pay and conditions, Sheldon said in a keynote address today at a Per-Capita event on the Reform Agenda.

He criticised the uberisation of jobs whereby companies dictate terms of engagement and ignore rights that go with being part of a civil society, such as sick leave, annual leave, maternity leave, retirement with dignity, minimum pay and protections against unfair termination.

“Disruptive technology companies need to be good corporate citizens. They need to think through the consequences of their innovations on the labour markets they disrupt, and work with the community and governments to ensure a framework for decent pay, rights and conditions,” he said.

Sheldon called for a “strong safety net for those displaced by technology” with a basic income, decent pension, healthcare and superan-

uation. As technology reduced the need for work in some sectors it was vital that a basic income be provided to working families.

“You can’t pay full-time bills with part-time wages or even no wages at all if people lose their jobs,” he warned.

Entrepreneur Mark Carnegie also warned against Australia following the model of other states where inequality is a major problem.

“More equal societies are better for everyone. We need to question going down the road of tearing the social fabric apart as has happened in the US and UK,” he said.

While the Turnbull government has spoken about the exciting times we live in and the potential for innovation, Labor leader Bill Shorten has stressed the importance of ensuring the entire community benefitted not just tech entrepreneurs.

“Disruption in isolation is no good if it doesn’t benefit society more broadly,” said Sheldon. **TT**

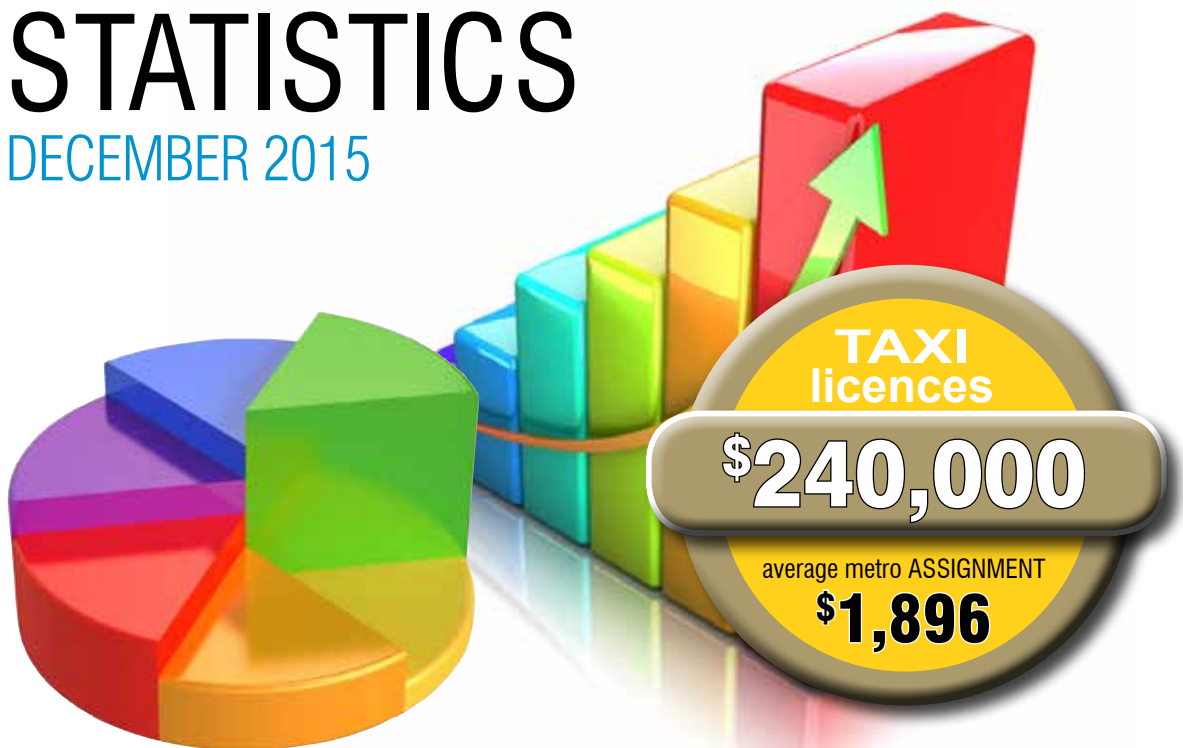
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STATISTICS

DECEMBER 2015



Taxi zone	Licence type	# of licences 30/6/14	# of licences 30/6/15	# of licences 18/1/16	Changes since 30/6/14	Changes since 30/6/15
Metro	Conventional	3,826	4,399	4,281	455	-118
	WAT	504	492	477	-27	-15
	Total	4,330	4,891	4,758	428	-133
Urban	Conventional	357	400	416	59	16
	WAT	75	79	81	6	2
	Total	432	479	497	65	18
Regional	Conventional	253	261	263	10	2
	WAT	75	77	72	-3	-5
	Total	328	338	335	7	-3
Country	Conventional	126	126	127	1	1
	WAT	36	34	35	-1	1
	Total	162	160	162	0	2
Totals	Conventional	4,562	5,186	5,087	525	-99
	WAT	690	682	665	-25	-17
	Total	5,252	5,868	5,752	500	-116

The above 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.

Number of drivers

Active drivers15,224
Accredited drivers (taxi, hire car & bus)44,527

Compliance outcomes

Vehicle Inspections 1,111
Rectification Notices 85
Infringement Notices 10
Official Warning notices 2

HIRE CAR LICENCES **\$37,450**

Number of Victorian Hire Vehicle Licences

Metropolitan Hire Cars 1,126
Country Hire Cars 64
Special Purpose Vehicles 943
Restricted Hire Cars 571
TOTAL **2,704**

The **metro taxi licence average price** of \$240,000 is based on the **2 genuine market based transactions** that occurred in the metropolitan zone during **December 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. **TT**



IT'S HERE - THE MEGADRONE SMART TAXI

Ehang 184 Autonomous Aerial Vehicle (AAV) is apparently the safest, Eco-est and Smartest low altitude autonomous aerial vehicle, aiming on providing Medium-Short Distance communication and transportation solution.



The EHang 184, was named for 'one' passenger, 'eight' propellers, and 'four' arms. When not in use, it can be folded up .

This megadrone is big enough to carry a passenger. Chinese company, Ehang, say their latest invention of an autonomous drone could be used as a smart taxi

The Ehang184 AAV is autonomous, so all the passenger has to do is enter their final destination into an app.

The all-electric vehicle has four arms and eight propellers and can travel up to 100 kph. It is primarily designed for travelling short to medium distances, about 15 kms.

"You know how it feels to sit in a Ferrari? This is 10 times better," George Yan, co-founder of Ehang said in an interview with DailyMail.com.

"Mass-adoption of the 184 has the potential to streamline congested traffic and dramatically reduce the kinds of accidents associated with any human-operated vehicle," the firm claims.

"It's been a lifetime goal of mine to make flight faster, easier and more convenient than ever. The 184 pro-

vides a viable solution to the many challenges the transportation industry faces in a safe and energy efficient way," said EHang CEO Huazhi Hu.

"The 184 is evocative of a future we've always dreamed of and is primed to alter the very fundamentals of the way we get around", he continued.

It offers great lifting power and safety. Even if one propeller malfunctions, it can still land in the nearest possible area safely.

The 184 was designed to be a 100% with green technology, and is powered by electricity only.

Ehang184 AAV takes off and lands vertically. It flies point to point (as the crow flies) based on altitude and latitude of the origin and termination point.

It is thunderstorm-proof and made from the same material as space craft. During extreme weather conditions, the command centre will prohibit the AAV from take-off.

Ehang estimates the price of the 184 will be around \$200,000 to \$300,000, and that it plans to make the drone commercially available sometime in 2016. **TT**

TAXATION NEWS

ARE YOU SUPERSTREAM READY?

In a few months SuperStream becomes mandatory and employers are being urged to cross SuperStream off their 'to-do' list ahead of the 30 June 2016 deadline.

It takes a little time to set up, but over a quarter of a million employers who have made the change are already enjoying (on average) a 70% reduction in the time they spend on super. That equates to approximately 1.5 hours each cycle!

If you haven't done so already your options to get ready include:

- upgrading your current payroll software
- using your super fund's online system
- using a messaging portal
- using a clearing house (like the ATO's free Small business superannuation clearing house).

You can also ask your accountant or bookkeeper for help.

An important part of SuperStream preparation is collecting your employees' TFNs and their funds' unique super identifiers (USIs). **TT**

BUSINESS TAX WEBINARS

Knowing how the tax system applies to your business can save you hassles down the track and even help you to avoid unexpected debt.

If you've just started a new business or you're thinking about setting one up, the Australian Taxation Office tax basics for small business webinar series can give you a head start on understanding your tax and super responsibilities.

The series is made up of 12 sessions that run for about 45 minutes each. The sessions cover many useful topics and these are detailed in the table on the next page --->

Booking your spot is easy and the sessions are interactive. Visit www.ato.gov.au and search for Small business Webinars. **TT**



Webinar Course Title	Description	Dates
An introduction to tax basics	Introduces you to the basic tax issues you need to consider if you are thinking about starting a business, such as business structures, tax registrations and record keeping.	2 February 2016, 11.00am
		10 February 2016, 9.00am
		16 February 2016, 11.00am
		22 February 2016, 3.00pm
		29 February 2016, 4.30pm
Income tax deductions	Looks at the fundamental principles of income tax deductions that apply to all businesses. We will look at the tax treatment of different deductions, including depreciation of assets.	2 February 2016, 12.45pm
		9 February 2016, 9.00am
		16 February 2016, 12.45pm
		24 February 2016, 2.30pm
		3 March 2016, 4.00pm
Home-based business	Provides you with information about claiming home-based expenses and understanding how capital gains tax may apply.	1 February 2016, 1.00pm
		15 February 2016, 11.00am
		1 March 2016, 4.30pm
Motor vehicle deductions	Runs through the special rules when claiming deductions for motor vehicles, and provides practical examples of how to record and claim the expenses	1 February 2016, 2.30pm
		15 February 2016, 9.00am
		2 March 2016, Noon
Concessions for small business	Looks at the concessions that are available for income tax, Capital Gains Tax (CGT) and Goods and Services Tax (GST).	4 February 2016, Noon
		9 February 2016, 1.45pm
		24 February 2016, 10.15am
Activity statement essentials	Explains how to complete your activity statement. The primary focus is on the labels to be completed for the GST, Pay As You Go (PAYG) withholding and PAYG instalments.	4 February 2016, 9.00am
		9 February 2016, Noon
		23 February 2016, 4.00pm
Goods and services tax	Helps you to understand how GST works and its implications for business.	4 February 2016, 10.30am
		11 February 2016, 4.30pm
		17 February 2016, 1.00pm
		23 February 2016, 10.45am
		1 March 2016, 2.00pm
Budgeting and record keeping	Helps you meet your tax obligations, as it is essential that you maintain complete and accurate records. We will also discuss the importance of budgeting, and the key role that records play in budget management.	3 February 2016, 9.00am
		8 February 2016, Noon
		24 February 2016, 4.30pm
Employer obligations overview	Explains the tax issues and obligations relevant to employers, such as Pay As You Go (PAYG) withholding, super guarantee and Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT).	3 February 2016, 11.00am
		11 February 2016, 12.30pm
		25 February 2016, 4.30pm
Super obligations for employers	Takes a more in-depth look at super for employers. We explain which of your employees are eligible for super, how to calculate their super and what happens when super is not paid on time.	3 February 2016, 1.00pm
		11 February 2016, 11.00am
		22 February 2016, 4.30pm
Issues for contractors	Addresses some of the commonly asked questions around employee versus contractor, as well as other issues relevant to contractors, such as personal services income.	2 February 2016, 2.45pm
		16 February 2016, 9.00am
		29 February 2016, Noon
Depreciation	Addresses some of the commonly asked questions around claiming deductions for depreciating assets.	4 February 2016, 2.30pm
		8 February 2016, 1.15pm
		25 February 2016, 11.00am



AARON de Rozario


Taxi Services Commissioner

INDUSTRY

Taxis and Hire Cars will be in high demand over the coming months with many big events taking place in Melbourne such as the Melbourne Wine and Food Festival, the Australian Grand Prix and Moomba, so I encourage you to maintain the high standard of service your customers have come to expect.

Cruise ships are also in town during February and March. The TSC encourages all taxi drivers to support and service this growing tourism market.

Taxis can access Station Pier for passenger drop off and collection from the managed taxi rank once security has undertaken a quick identification check.

Peak service “green top” taxis are authorised to operate over additional hours from Station Pier, Port Melbourne during designated days only. 

CEO on INDUSTRY UPDATE

Knowledge modules

results notice


Drivers attempting Knowledge modules will now receive more detailed information about how they've scored with enhancements made to the results notice.

Up until recently, drivers were provided with an overall percentage score when they attempted a module.

This provided drivers with an indication about how close they were to achieving the 85 per cent pass mark, but it didn't highlight specific areas they needed to focus on.

From 12 December 2015, the results notice includes a percentage range for each topic, linked to the chapters of the handbooks.

This additional information will assist drivers in understanding what areas of the Knowledge they need to focus on before attempting the module again.

Drivers who have attempted modules previously can also view detailed results of previous attempts by logging on to their Driver Portal. 


MPTP

smart cards

If you require a new Multi Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) card, these can be ordered over the phone by calling the Accreditation team on 1800 638 802.

Your new card will be posted to you, or can be delivered to the Taxi Services Commission (TSC) for you to pick up the following business day.

A new PIN will be provided for the card in the same envelope.

If you want to change your PIN on your smart card, please note that this can only be done in person at the TSC, and cannot be done over the phone. 

TAXI CAB UPDATE

New taxi industry

customer charter

With increasing competition in the taxi industry, those who focus on the customer experience may have a competitive edge.

A customer charter, outlining the key elements of safety, service, accessibility and feedback/complaints, can be an effective marketing tool and increase public confidence in the industry.

The Taxi Services Commission has developed a new Customer Charter as a model for the taxi industry. The Charter was developed in consultation with the industry and various community stakeholders, including disability groups.

All industry participants, in particular taxi operators and those providing taxi booking services, are encouraged to adopt and implement the model customer charter.

The taxi industry can decide the method by which it notifies passengers. Some ideas are:

- On your company's website
- Via booking applications
- In other communication/engagement with customers
- Displayed within taxis – subject to existing regulations
- In training exercises or ongoing education of drivers
- As a tool to help raise industry standards where areas for improvement have been identified. **TT**

Accreditation and

licensing update

The Accreditation and Licensing team has recently updated and simplified its taxi assignment form.

The new form includes a payment section, removing the need for you to attend the TSC.

The assignment form and associated documentation can be submitted via post or emailed to licensing@taxi.vic.gov.au

In addition, a reminder that when submitting paperwork at the Taxi Services Commission (TSC), all related fees must be paid at the time of submission including assignments, transfers, permit and vehicle substitutions.

All fees must be paid directly to the TSC; fees can no longer be paid at VicRoads or Road Safety Inspections.

When faxing or emailing your documentation, fees can be paid via the TSC payment authorisation forms (credit cards).

When posting your documentation, payment can be made via bank cheque, money order or the TSC payment authorisation form.

Alternatively, if you are attending the TSC, payment of bank cheque, money order, and EFTPOS will be accepted. **TT**

CUSTOMER CHARTER FOR TAXI SERVICES IN VICTORIA

**the rights and responsibilities of
taxi passengers and drivers**



In summary, taxi customers have the right to:

- a driver who is licensed and accredited
- choose a preferred route
- see the metered fare
- travel in a clean, tidy, well-maintained and roadworthy cab
- have the air conditioning turned on or off
- have the music system turned off
- be accompanied by an assistance animal
- refuse a multiple hiring
- use an EFTPOS facility where available
- use valid credit or debit cards as displayed in the cab
- be given a receipt or tax invoice for their trip.

Taxi customers have a responsibility to:

- pay the correct fare, including any tolls or booking fees;
- wear a seat belt
- not request the driver to exceed the number of passengers permitted to be carried in the taxi.

In summary, taxi drivers have the right to:

- ask for proof of ability to pay or request a deposit up to the estimated fare
- refuse to take passengers or terminate a hiring if they are violent, noisy, misbehaving, filthy or offensive.

Taxi drivers have a responsibility to:

- be courteous and helpful
- know and obey traffic laws
- not refuse a fare (other than for the reasons outlined above)
- know major routes and destinations
- understand and speak English
- take the most direct, practicable route
- be neat, clean and tidy
- wear an approved uniform
- assist passengers where reasonable and be understanding of people with special needs.

Full details of the Customer Charter can be found at the Taxi Services Commission website.

DRIVER OF THE MONTH



Alaeddin Demirdes started driving with Regal Combined Taxis in Hawthorn 26 years ago and currently drives for Silver Top Taxis Silver Service. Alaeddin has never had any major problems with his passengers and he attributes this to his friendly and caring nature. He drives taxis because he can create his own flexible timetable. Alaeddin is also an avid fisherman and spends every spare moment out on the water throwing a line.



YEAR OF THE MONKEY

Monkey is the ninth in the 12-year cycle of Chinese zodiac. The Years of the Monkey include 1920, 1932, 1944, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1992, 2004, 2016, 2028...

The monkey is a clever animal. It is usually compared to a smart person. People under the sign of the Monkey are wise, intelligent, confident, charismatic, loyal, inventive and have leadership. The weaknesses of the Monkeys are being egotistical, arrogant, crafty, restless and snobbish.

CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVITIES at Federation Square

Chinese Food Market

6 + 7 February | 10am – 9pm

Enjoy dishes from all the regions of China including Sichuan hot-spicy food, Xinjiang lamb skewer, Cantonese sweet and sour dish, Shanghai steam meat bun and Hangzhou finger food, as well as dumplings, sweet rice cake and moon cake.

Chinese New Year Light Celebrations

6 + 7 February | 24 hours

Admire brilliant light displays that connect Melbourne's major precincts, Fed Square, Southbank and Docklands. Radiating in Fed Square will be a giant illuminated Chinese fan and Chinese lanterns, two Chinese lucky children and three shining monkeys.

Multicultural Entertainment

Dancing, singing, instruments, Chinese martial arts, plus a talent show and competitions.

New Year's Eve Countdown

Sunday 7 February | 10pm – 2am (next day)

Celebrate the return of spring and welcome the Year of the Monkey! The New Year's Eve countdown will start with lion dancing and drumming in The Square then a broadcast of the China CCTV's national New Year's Eve gala program.

INNOVATIONS FOR THE FUTURE, TODAY

SOMABAR ROBOTIC BARTENDER



One extremely smart bartender. It integrates Wi-Fi connectivity, onboard sensors, electronic ingredient tagging and automated cleaning making bartending as easy as pressing a button. Using the Somabar app, you can now share and create cocktails with anyone on the globe in seconds.

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A smart sonar that works in conjunction with your smartphone. It is specially created for professional and amateur anglers, designed to locate fish, get information about depth, water temperature, bottom contour and much more. Deeper operates in both fresh and salt water.

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2016 CRUISE SEASON

HIGH TAXI DEMAND TIMES

Date	Cruise Ship	Peak taxi demand	Disembark Time	Embark Time
Tue 2 Feb	Pacific Jewel	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Fri 5 Feb	Golden Princess	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Thu 11 Feb	Golden Princess	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Sat 13 Feb	Pacific Jewel	1230 - 1530	1200	2100
Tue 16 Feb	Pacific Eden	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Fri 19 Feb	Pacific Eden	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Mon 22 Feb	Pacific Eden	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Wed 24 Feb	Golden Princess	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Fri 4 Mar	Pacific Eden	1230 - 1530	1200	2100
Sun 6 Mar	Queen Victoria	0830 - 1130	0800	2200
Mon 7 Mar	Pacific Eden	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Tue 8 Mar	Golden Princess	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Fri 11 Mar	Pacific Eden	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Tue 15 Mar	Pacific Eden	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Sat 19 Mar	Pacific Eden	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Tue 22 Mar	Golden Princess	0730 - 1030	0700	1600
Mon 4 Apr	Golden Princess	0730 - 1030	0700	1600

A **full load** of passengers will disembark with luggage in the morning and a **full load** will embark with luggage in the afternoon.

PIER ACCESS

Taxis (including PS taxis) will be granted access to drive on to Station Pier once an identification check has been conducted at the front gate.

There will be high demand for HOVs and Station Wagons during disembarkation due to passengers travelling in groups and luggage size.

Inverloch Jazz FESTIVAL



11-14 March 2016

The festival is a community based event with over 40 bands playing a variety of music. Ambient, Contemporary, Traditional, Swing, Big Band, Latin, Funk and Rock Fusion and so many more great shows to see.

Held in Inverloch, a small seaside town in South Gippsland, Victoria, the town becomes alive as Jazz kicks off on the Friday night in the community Centre with the big band MOJO (Mordialloc Jazz Orchestra) from 7.30 to 10.30pm.

Enjoy the music greats of today, "up close and personal", and see the cutting edge artists of tomorrow emerge, all in one beautiful location.

The Inverloch Jazz Festival is an occasion not to be missed by any sun/fun loving music fan.

Saturday - Inverloch Rotary Club Street Market from 8am - 3pm; a Grand Parade from 10am followed by more jazz and blues until 11pm. Stamp & Coin Fair and the Annual Art Show 9am-4pm.

Sunday - morning combined churches jazz service 10-11:30am at the Community Centre. Followed by all the jazz genres and more until 11pm.

Monday - final day of the festival - a free picnic in the park.

Bring your picnic gear and relax with plenty of food and drink stalls for refreshments as you listen to The Big Band Jamboree to complete the festival. 11am to 4pm. **TT**

TICKET PRICES

for full details and bookings please visit www.inverlochjazzfestival.com

FULL FESTIVAL WEEKEND 4 or more full festival bookings receive a free bottle of wine on Friday night	\$90 at the door \$80 pre book
FRIDAY NIGHT ONLY (7.30pm – 10.30pm)	\$35
SATURDAY or SUNDAY - FULL day pass	\$50
- DAY session to 11am-6pm	\$35
- NIGHT session 7pm-11pm	\$35
Young People (16 years & under)	FREE
Rotary Street Parade, Church Service, Jazz Picnic	FREE

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MAJOR EVENTS

this month in Melbourne

17 Jan - 7 Feb		MIDSUMMA FESTIVAL is Melbourne's annual queer celebration. A federation of arts and cultural events spread over 85 different venues. Having been held annually since 1988, it is a significant attraction on the Victorian summer calendar. Each year over 160,000 individuals from around the globe participate in and attend between 100 to 160 festival events.	Various venues in and around Melbourne and regional Victoria
18 - 14 Feb		PAUSE FEST 2016 Be immersed in the world's best digital minds and discover people, passion and purpose at Pause Fest. With a week-long schedule of screenings, interactive activities, expos, panel discussions and parties, as well as a huge three-day Creative, Tech and Business conference, Pause Fest 2016 is the ultimate hub for digital transformation for everyone.	Federation Square Corner of Swanston & Flinders Streets Melbourne
6 - 28 Feb		SUSTAINABLE LIVING FESTIVAL embrace your eco-city at this year's Sustainable Living Festival. Get all the latest know-how on how you can live cleaner, smarter and healthier in 2016 by diving into the Festival's huge program of art, film, performance, forums and special exhibits. With hundreds of events staged across the city, the Festival showcases leading solutions for ecological and social sustainability.	Various venues in and around Melbourne
20 - 21 Feb		WHITE NIGHT MELBOURNE is the city as you know it, turned on its head in a dusk until dawn celebration of culture and creativity. A night where the surreal seems real, White Night Melbourne is a rare opportunity to experience the city in a different light. The event transforms the impossible into the possible through installation, lighting, exhibitions, street performances, film, music, dance and interactive events taking place in the streets and laneways, parklands, public spaces and cultural institutions of Melbourne.	City streets, parklands, laneways, public spaces and cultural institutions of Melbourne's CBD From NGV on St Kilda Road through to the Carlton Gardens
27 - 28 Feb		29TH LONSDALE STREET GREEK FESTIVAL takes over the city's historic Greek Precinct this February. With free entertainment across two stages, Greek street food, pop-up bars, cooking demonstrations, children's activities and more, this much-loved festival is an event for all ages.	Historic Greek Precinct 168 Lonsdale Street Melbourne
20 Feb		SIDNEY MYER FREE CONCERT Joshua Weilerstein conducts Dvorak's Carnival and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No.5. These flank the Violin Concerto by Samuel Barber, with soloist, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Concertmaster Dale Barltrop.	Sidney Myer Music Bowl Alexandra Avenue Melbourne

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ROAD CLOSURES

this month in Melbourne

Street	Dates	Details	Purpose
Eades Street East Melbourne	until 15 February 9am to 4pm weekdays 7am to 5pm weekends	Full closure of carriageway (both directions) between Victoria Parade and Albert Street.	Reinstall fire service
Flinders Street Melbourne	until 14 March 7 pm to 4am	Flinders Street, north side between Swanston Street and Russell Street.	Kerb and channel, footpath and profile works
Wells Street Melbourne	1-2 February 7 am to 4.30 pm	Full closure between Coventry Street and Dorcas Street.	Profile and resheet works
Little Collins Street	1 - 25 February	Full closure between William Street and Queen Street	Footpath reconstruction
Flinders Lane Melbourne	5 to 7 February and 12 to 14 February	Full closure of the Flinders Lane carriageway, between ACDC Lane and Russell Street. Also temporary full closure of Olivers Lane and partial closure of Russell Street southbound carriageway.	Tower crane removal
Lansdowne Street East Melbourne	7 February 2016 Midnight to 11:30pm.	Full closure of carriageway (both directions) between Victoria Parade and Wellington Parade.	Event Closure
Dynon Road Bridge West Melbourne	1 and 2 March 9pm to 5:30am	Full closure of eastbound carriageway over Maribyrnong River.	Road maintenance works



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Wheelchair licence for sale. Assignment enquiries welcome. \$150,000 ono. Call George Yannas 0400 145 841.

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