

TAXI TALK

VOICE OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

May 2015

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Victorian Taxi Association

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SHIFTING DESIGN, INNOVATION & THE AUSTRALIAN CAR **GEAR**

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1 Swanston Street, Melbourne

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April Competition Winners

1st prize - I.M. Young; 2nd prize - A.I. Marcus; 3rd prize S. Mahen. 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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SERVICE quality



David Samuel
VTA CEO

Why taxi industry regulation is vital to service quality

I continue to find the current discussion and debate surrounding the industry I represent both frustrating and disappointing.

The arguments that continue to be advanced by a small number of 'experts', commentators and journalists lack rigour and too often depend on theories and conspiracies.

The latest Sydney Morning Herald editorial in the wake of the Harper Review from Ms Knight is no exception ('Harper competition review dragging taxis, shopping hours into 21st century', Elizabeth Knight, 2 April).

Restrictions on taxi licence numbers were created to protect the consumer from a significant market failure, an oversupply of poor quality taxi services, as indeed all regulation is intended to do.

Contrary to the reporting which prevails on this issue, these restrictions have not been maintained to protect 'industry incumbents'.

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

2015 VTA Conference

**Tuesday 29 September
and
Wednesday 30 September**

All Seasons Hotel in Bendigo

More details will be available soon on the
VTA website at www.victaxi.com.au



Recent reforms in Victoria have made taxi licences accessible in unlimited supply and we have seen a greater than 10% increase in the taxi fleet with no corresponding increase in demand.

The vastly reduced barriers to entry have not led to a decrease in price for consumers, but the opposite. Despite the space for greater competition, business costs remain the determinant of service price for the customer.

Ms Knight does acknowledge the impact of Victorian reforms on taxi licence owners but fails to understand these people are not the only losers from taxi deregulations - most importantly, the customer loses.

In every comparable jurisdiction which has implemented deregulatory measures such as those being recommended by Harper, the consumer has suffered from higher prices and deteriorating service standards.

This is not a partisan opinion but the findings of countless post-reform reviews which in many

cases have resulted in licence regulation being reinstated in the name of the customer.

You only need to look at the situation in Ireland, New Zealand, the Northern Territory and any number of North American States to understand where this has all gone wrong before.

Finally, the phone applications that recent market entrants use to run illegal taxi services are nothing new. The taxi industry had the same booking technology long before any 'disruptive technology' hit

Australian shores - the argument that technology is driving the need for industry deregulation is absurd.

A new app should not legitimise a product that risks consumer safety from a company that proudly breaks local laws throughout Australia. If the law is to be changed it should be done to accommodate the needs of the community, not the flawed business models of large multinational companies. ❀

Working with **EVERYONE**



The VTA is the peak industry body representing taxis in Victoria and celebrated 50 years as an association in 2014.

A membership based organisation, the VTA advocates for its members and promotes the work of the taxi industry.

We work with the regulator and the Victorian Government to achieve policy and regulation which recognise the operational realities of taxis and encourages excellence in service delivery.

We work with the industry to ensure that participants understand their responsibilities under the law.

The VTA also represents the industry to the public, responding to relevant news and announcements and trying to get the word out there about the great work of our members.

We also work to identify new business opportunities and liaise with local governments to represent taxis in discussions about local planning, rank upgrade and planning for major events.

As a member of the national Australian Taxi Industry Association we know about national and international trends, are represented in national plans and strategies and work with interstate colleagues.

Most importantly, the strength of the VTA is built on our members.

It is hard working taxi drivers, operators and networks throughout Victorian who work around the clock to deliver door-to-door transport for everyone in the community and give us a story to tell. ❀



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Region news

BENDIGO

Taxi drivers in the large regional city are losing work to illegal ride-share operators who use social media, namely Facebook, to offer rides to the public around town for cash.

Bendigo Taxis Manager John Knee, said these rogue drivers take work off legitimate drivers “who do all the training and have all the right equipment in their cars”.

Mr Knee also highlighted that illegal ride-sharing was an issue of safety for passengers.

“If you’re a passenger and in an accident (in one of these cars), you’re not insured and there are no cameras in these cars.”

Mr Knee said he had reported the issue to the Taxi Services Commission and would like to see these groups offering illegal services shut down.

“They’re probably doing it for a bit of cash... but sooner or later someone is going to have a major accident, someone’s going to get hurt,” he said.

Bendigo taxi drivers have also reflected on the potential impact of Uber coming to Bendigo.

“If you want to compete with the taxi

industry, do it legally; use hire cars, (commercially) licensed and properly accredited drivers” a local driver commented.

“It’s highly dangerous if the driver is not fully accredited (to commercial standards) and you don’t know the condition of the car. You’re missing out on full GPS and full cameras and a formal complaints process in the event something goes wrong.”

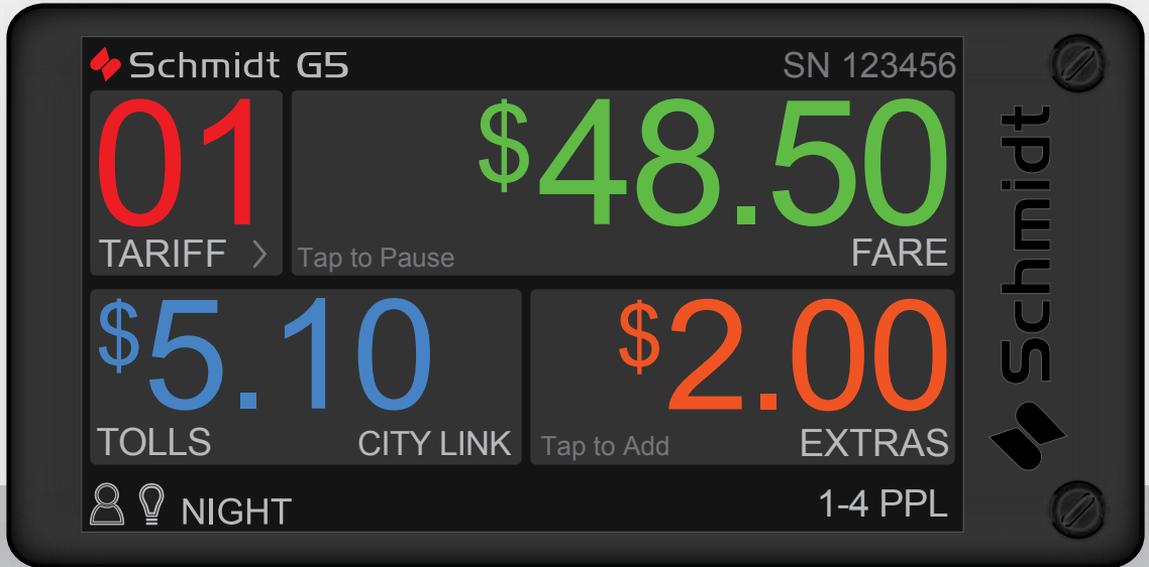
He also noted that standard vehicle insurance policies did not cover passengers in ride-sharing arrangements where cash had been exchanged.

“If you’re a taxi you have full comprehensive insurance. Under private vehicle insurance, there are terms and conditions which state you cannot use your vehicle as a taxi, emergency vehicle or courier service. There are so many things that could go wrong in the event of an accident.”

Taxis Association of Bendigo Co-op ❀



Schmidt G5 Taximeter



Coming in 2015

The revolutionary G5 taximeter will be available when the Taxi Services Commission completes its major redraft of taximeter requirements. This significant overhaul and rewrite of Victorian taximeter requirements is expected to be finalised in early 2015. Shortly after these requirements are complete, the G5 will be released to the market.

Infused with intuitive touch-screen navigation, the G5 is the most user friendly taximeter ever developed. Advanced features range from automated road tolling, to capture and storage of complete taxi activity. This includes the details of every fare taken and the entire location, speed, acceleration and braking history of the taxi.

Direct communication with the internet, takes this taximeter to the next level. This allows over

the air rate changes and software upgrades plus the upload of all shift report data via 3G or WIFI. Via secure internet log-in, taxi operators have access to all shift report details in addition to current taximeter status. Drivers also have the significant convenience of secure log-in access to their individual shift reports.

Incorporated into this powerful taximeter, is an optional Passenger Detection System which starts the taximeter automatically when a passenger enters the taxi, thereby ensuring that every taxi fare is metered.

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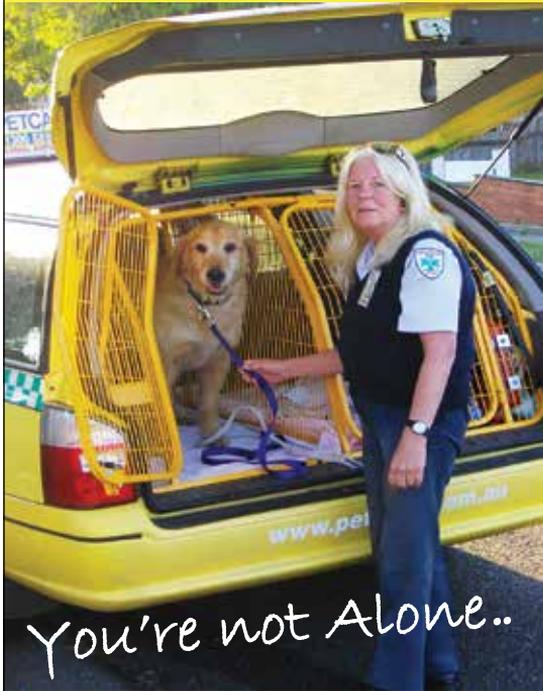
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Telephone:

To open a new Taxi account call 03 8656 8121. For general enquiries call 1300 360 962.

CityLink will support the taxi industry through this change.❖





DRIVER of the MONTH



Con Karagiannakias belongs to the elite fleet of 20+ year drivers! Originally driving for Arrow Taxis he now drives for Black Cabs. Loves his job and chatting with people. He believes that taxis as we know them, will not be around in 10 years time. ♣

everyone has the **RIGHT TO FEEL SAFE**



Our diverse and multicultural community is one of our State's greatest strengths.

The Victorian community collectively comes from over 200 countries, speaks more than 230 languages and dialects, and follows 135 faiths. It is an honour to serve such a rich and diverse community that so many Victorians are proud of.

Sadly, I have seen unacceptable reports of crimes and incidents motivated by prejudice, discrimination and racism occurring in our community.

Crimes that are motivated by prejudice take many forms. Some include physical assault, damage to property, harassment, verbal or written abuse, threats or offensive graffiti. In whatever form it takes, this is a very serious crime and should be reported to police.

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Last year there were reports of women who were assaulted on public transport for wearing a Hijab. Some women have been a victim of this, some have witnessed it, and others may simply fear that it will happen to them.

When incidents like these are reported to police, we are able to thoroughly investigate and make every attempt to hold offenders accountable. In many cases offenders have been charged and prosecuted.

Everyone has the right to feel safe and secure in the community. This includes when practising their faith and pursuing their values, beliefs and interests. If a person chooses to wear a Hijab, Habit, Burqa, Turban, Yamaka or any other faith attire, it is a choice that should be respected as it is their democratic right to do so.

Prejudice, discrimination and racism do not belong in the Victorian community. The diversity and mul-

ticulturalism of Victoria needs to be protected.

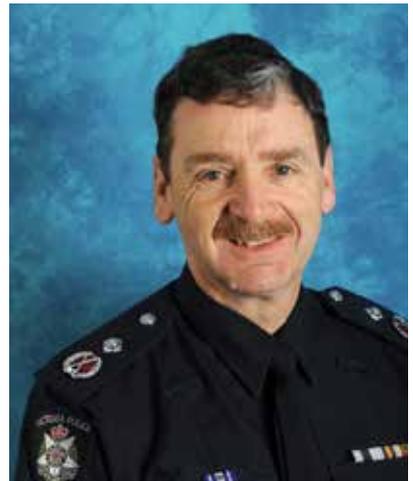
I understand some members of the community may feel afraid to report this type of crime or may simply believe that Victoria Police won't take it seriously. I can assure you, we do take these crimes and incidents very seriously.

I have reiterated across the organisation for our members to identify, address and respond to any crimes or incidents that are motivated by prejudice. We are here to help. If you are victim or a witness, inform Victoria Police.

We investigate all reports and make every attempt to hold offenders accountable.

Our message to the community is that no one should be afraid to report a crime. If you are in an emergency dial 000 immediately.

If you are a victim please contact



Tim Cartwright APM
Acting Chief Commissioner
Victoria Police

your local police station or you can call Crime Stoppers confidentially on 1800 333 000.

It is everyone's responsibility to make sure crimes motivated by prejudice are brought to the attention of Victoria Police and that all Victorians are accepting of cultural diversity. ❖

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3 - 6 May

Overnight closures of Warrigal Road entry ramp, inbound from 3 May to 6 May.

16 - 17 May

Overnight full closure of the Monash Freeway, inbound and outbound, between Warrigal Road and Burke Road from 16 May to 17 May.

Closure of the Toorak Road entry ramp outbound on 17 May.

Ramp closures up to one hour prior to the full M1 closure.

Speed reduced to 40km/h through site in lead up to closure, and up to half hour delays.

23 - 24 May

Overnight full closure of the Monash Freeway inbound and outbound, be-

tween Huntingdale Road and Burke Road, from 23 May to 24 May.

Closure of the Toorak Road entry ramp outbound on 24 May.

Ramp closures up to one hour prior to the full M1 closure.

Detours will be available. Please plan ahead and avoid the areas if possible.

For further details please contact the Roadworks project team directly on 9224 7529 or via email mfmm@lei-con.com.au. ❀

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mercedes F015 CAR OF THE FUTURE

"Anyone who focuses solely on the technology has not yet grasped how autonomous driving will change our society," explained Mercedes-Benz chairman, Dieter Zetsche, at the unveiling of the F015 Luxury In Motion. "The car is growing beyond its role as a mere means of transport and will ultimately become a mobile living space."

The pivotal feature of the innovative interior concept is the variable seating system, with four rotating

lounge chairs that allow a face-to-face seat configuration.

It includes a sophisticated autonomous operating system and so-called digital activity space that Mercedes-Benz predicts will allow occupants the freedom to use their time on the road more intelligently than is the case today, especially in city driving environments.

As the autonomous car takes over from the driver in situations where driving isn't much fun, such as

slow-moving traffic, it gives real added quality to time spent out on the road.

One core theme of the innovative interior concept is a continuous exchange of information between vehicle, passengers and the outside world. The F015 Luxury in Motion communicates with its surroundings both visually and acoustically. Six displays are installed and tastefully mounted in the instrument panel and the rear and side walls. ❖



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The Mercedes F015 Luxury in Motion, an electric hybrid, futuristically-styled, four-door automated driverless car, was unveiled at the 2015 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas last month.

The passengers in self-driving cars use their newly gained free time while travelling, for relaxing or working as they please.



TAXI licences

\$297,833

average metro ASSIGNMENT

\$1,983

Taxi and Hire Car STATISTICS

MAR 2015

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 19/4/15	Change in no. of licences
Metro	Conventional	3,826	4,391	565
	WAT	504	499	-5
	Total	4,330	4,890	560
Urban	Conventional	357	393	36
	WAT	75	78	3
	Total	432	471	39
Regional	Conventional	253	260	7
	WAT	75	77	2
	Total	328	337	9
Country	Conventional	126	126	0
	WAT	36	35	-1
	Total	162	161	-1
Totals	Conventional	4,562	5,170	608
	WAT	690	689	-1
	Total	5,252	5,859	607

Number of drivers

Active drivers 15,867
Accredited drivers (taxi, hire car & bus).... 40,374

Compliance outcomes

Vehicle Inspections 512
Rectification Notices 84
Notices of Unroadworthiness 0
Infringement Notices 44
Official Warning notices 10
Regulation 19 notice 35

HIRE CAR LICENCES **\$36,563**

Number of Victorian Hire Vehicle Licences

Metropolitan Hire Cars 1,067
Country Hire Cars 56
Special Purpose Vehicles 943
Restricted Hire Cars 601
TOTAL **2,67**

The metro taxi licence average price of \$297,833 is based on the 6 genuine market based transactions that occurred in the metropolitan zone during March 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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ROAD POLICING DRUG AND ALCOHOL SECTION

Country or Metro, back street or main road, you are likely to come across a booze or drug bus taking impaired drivers off the roads. *Police Life* magazine journalists spent a day with the Road Policing Drug and Alcohol Section.

2:15PM



Police prepare for the drug bus shift. Six probationary constables work with RPDAS for about four weeks to learn how to administer drug and breath tests.

2:45PM



The bus is set up and the equipment in place. Two highway patrol cars support the bus with one in a nearby street to ensure anyone trying to sneak past is caught.

3:30PM



Random testing is underway and police have already caught two drivers who had taken methamphetamine and a driver without his P-plates displayed.

5:10PM



After a five minute preliminary drug test, a driver with a positive reading to methamphetamine is taken into the drug bus for the second test, an oral fluid test, which will be sent to a lab for confirmation.

A man in his 30s in a business suit, a young woman driving a hatchback and a 53-year-old woman. What do they have in common?

They have all been nabbed driving while on drugs, namely ice or speed.

Victoria Police's Road Policing Drug and Alcohol Section (RPDAS) runs eight drug and booze buses at sites across the state.

Police Life spent a shift with the team aiming to randomly test drivers for drugs from a static location in Reservoir, in Melbourne's north.

The six constables, who recently finished their training at the Victoria Police Academy, prepare the bus site and the first group of drivers is randomly pulled in for testing. Four drivers are breath tested, then given a preliminary drug test, which the driver swipes over their tongue. While they wait for the results, police check their driver's licence and registration.

Within minutes, a constable has discovered a young driver without his P-plates displayed. He is handed an infringement notice.

As more drivers roll in, one constable signals to a colleague that he has a drug driver. The woman steps out of her car and stumbles her way to the bus, where she undergoes the next step in the process, an oral fluid test.

She later admits that she took speed about two days ago and did not realise it would still be in her system.

Her sample will be sent to a laboratory for further testing. She is restricted from driving for 12 hours and will have her licence suspended for at least three months once her sample is confirmed in a laboratory.

A 43-year-old man also tests positive to methamphetamine and tells police he took about \$30 worth of speed. His licence will be suspended once it is confirmed in the lab also.

Up to 1000 breath tests are conducted by police during each booze bus shift.

THE BUSES ARE OUT ON THE ROADS FOR UP TO

400

HOURS PER WEEK

PLACED IN SITES BASED ON ROAD COLLISION STATISTICS AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS

When the drug bus is operating, up to 150 drivers are tested for alcohol and drugs over the course of each shift.

In Reservoir, two women and two men tested positive to methamphetamine and one man was positive for cannabis.

Police also caught a 40-year-old with a .07 alcohol reading and fined drivers for five other traffic offences.

Senior Sergeant Mick Stafford said people like these were endangering other road users.

"Statistics show that you're more likely to be a victim of road fatality than a random act of homicide," he said.

"We hope that having the buses out and about will deter people from driving while on alcohol or drugs.

"We test for methamphetamine, ecstasy and cannabis with the random drug testing program and we are currently seeing an increase in the detection of methamphetamine."

After police finish their training at the Victoria Police Academy they spend four weeks at RPDAS expanding their knowledge of road policing.

"They're not just standing there holding out the preliminary breath test straw, they're also educating the public about safe driving behaviour," Sen Sgt Stafford said.

The buses are out on the roads for up to 400 hours per week, placed in sites based on road collision statistics and operational needs.

Their testing activities include country events such as the Southern 80 at Echuca and Meredith Music Festival.

Leading Senior Constable Clayton Smith has worked for RPDAS for about 13 years and said he was still surprised by how dangerous some drivers could be.

He remembers pulling over a woman who blew .301 on a breath test.

"She almost fell when she was getting out of the car and I had to get someone to stand behind her as she was getting into the booze bus in case she fell backwards," he said.

"She was an alcoholic and her daughter called two days later to thank us for taking her mum's licence away."

After almost 20 years with RPDAS, Sergeant Richard Bova said he still enjoyed his work.

"I like working with the trainees," he said.

"They're fantastic. The energy they have is great. They all say let's go out and do some work.

"We are mentoring them from day one and provide them with positive road policing experiences so that when they leave us, they feel confident in themselves and bring that experience and knowledge to the police station they go to." ❀

Editorial: **Maria Carnovale**
Photography: **Craig Sillitoe**

Reprinted with permission from
Police Life - Summer 2015 edition



JAMES Holyman ac Taxi Services Commissi

INDUS U

Please be aware that there have been instances of theft of personal belongings and valuables in taxis by passengers and other parties. Drivers are reminded to keep their valuables secure at all times and out of sight of other persons.

From Monday 4 May 2015 the TSC will begin charging a fee to provide a duplicate driver certificate should you need a replacement. Details of the fee can be found on our website taxi.vic.gov.au/drivers/fees-and-charges.

ting CEO

on

INDUSTRY UPDATE

Driver agreement review

Earlier this year, the Taxi Services Commission (TSC) commenced a review of the impacts of the driver agreement.



The six-month review was requested by taxi industry participants during consultation.

In order to conduct the review the TSC received data from industry participants. Over 50 permit holders and 100 taxi drivers participated.

While data gathered to date is providing some useful insights into the impacts of the driver agreement, both the industry and TSC see merits in extending the analysis period to ensure that the review process captures a true and complete picture.

Therefore additional data will now be analysed covering the period up to March 2015. To achieve this, the TSC will use its internal data sources to complete the analysis and no further collection will be required. ❀

Taxi quality ratings

From 1 July 2013, the Compliance Services Branch (CSB) introduced the iFACTS system - a tablet-based application that electronically captures all inspection activity and outcomes.

The iFACTS system allows the TSC to collect and analyse inspection data in a manner that supports the TSC's objectives and enables performance reporting across the industry.

As part of the benchmarking of industry standards,

a Taxi Quality Rating (TQR) has been introduced to monitor the quality and safety standards of taxi-cabs.

The TQR provides a seven category rating scale from high quality taxi down to unsafe taxi. With the introduction of the TQR, ratings for permit holders and taxi booking services are calculated.

These ratings can then be used for ongoing compliance and enforcement activities.



RATINGS

1. High quality taxi (HQT)
2. Quality taxi (QT)
3. Partially non-compliant (PNC)
4. Potentially unsafe taxi (PUT)
5. Substantially non-compliant (SNC)
6. Poor quality taxi (PQT)
7. Unsafe taxi (UT)



During an inspection by an Industry Compliance Officer, if a vehicle is identified as poor quality or unsafe, it would attract a TQR rating of 6 or 7.

rating 6 - Poor Quality Taxi (PQT)

A rectification notice is issued for major items, such as:

- Security camera
- Cab charge EFTPOS.

An infringement and / or official warning notice is also issued.

rating 7 - Unsafe Taxi (UT)

A defect notice (NOU) is issued for imminent safety issues, such as:

- Tyres with exposed cording
- Defective SRS airbag / ABS systems.

The '6 and 7' project was a safety measure initiated by the CSB to reinspect vehicles within an eight week period of the notice being cleared to ensure that Permit Holders were abiding by their obligations. Analysis of iFACTS data quickly enables the CSB to identify industry participants of interest.

With reference to Regulation 19 of the Transport (Taxi-cab) Regulations 2005, permit holders are requested to produce required vehicles for a directed vehicle inspection at the Quality Assurance Centre. The Permit Holder will be provided a checklist of all items that will be inspected.

An inspection will be conducted by an Industry Compliance Officer focusing on all safety and service related items.

Failure to produce the taxi-cab for inspection or producing a vehicle that does not meet the required regulations will result in compliance actions. ❖

Licence encumbrances

Licence holders and prospective transferees and assignees can manage their own taxi licence transfer and assignment transactions by applying directly to us. They also have the flexibility to use an agent who trades in taxi-cab licences.

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 (including a mortgage, charge, lien or trust) against the relevant licence. In the past, the TSC has accepted these requests and noted encumbrances.

As of 1 June 2015 the TSC will not accept any requests to note encumbrances received. Therefore no encumbrances will be noted on taxi-cab or hire car licences from this date.

Financial institutions should use of the *Personal Property Securities Register*.

The register enables individuals or organisations (such as financial institutions) to record their interest in property.

Members of the public are able to search this register to see if a security interest is listed against personal property (such as a licence).

A third party wishing to purchase a licence is respon-



sible for confirming if that taxi-cab or hire car licence is subject to an encumbrance.

They should also ensure that the licence is free of any such encumbrance at the time of settlement.

Any licence that has an encumbrance noted with the TSC (and printed on the licence certificate issued before 1 June 2015) will still need to provide evidence from the financial institution releasing the licence prior to the licence being transferred.

Application and transfer forms will be updated shortly to reflect this change. The TSC has recently written to financial institutions to advise of this change. ❀



Number plate labels

HYBRID

Permit holders are reminded that labels indicating the power source of the taxi must be displayed on front and rear number plates.

These labels alert emergency services (for example, fire and police) that necessary precautions need to be taken.

The requirement applies to electric (hybrid) and liquid petroleum gas (LPG) powered vehicles.

The labels can be obtained from VicRoads Customer Service Centres. ❀

GETTING THE RULES RIGHT

in the new sharing economy

Since I started talking and writing about the rise of the sharing economy, I've had lots of calls and emails from cabbies who are angry about the way services like Uber are disrupting the taxi market.



Andrew Leigh
Federal Shadow Assistant
Treasurer



Some of the big concerns they've raised include a lack of enforcement for current licencing laws, the risk to public safety, underpayment of tax and undercutting taxi wages. These are concerns that my party and I share too.

The current approach of having services like Uber operate completely outside the regulatory framework isn't acceptable. It leads to unfair competition because existing providers like those in your industry are bound by rules and requirements that sharing economy services aren't. It also means that we can't protect consumers or ensure accessibility to the standard Australians rightly expect. That's why Labor wants to work with the community to figure out what rules we need to govern new services in the sharing economy – from Uber today to whatever services come next.

There's a couple of core values that will guide Labor's response as we think, listen and talk to people about these issues. We want to protect

workers' rights, promote public safety and consumer protections and improve accessibility and equity; while ensuring fair competition. How we translate these principles into practice is now up for discussion with you and the Australian community more broadly.

I don't pretend that this will be easy, but I do believe governments owe it to consumers and business operators to take this challenge seriously. I'm certainly keen to tackle it, which is why Labor has launched our discussion paper and consultation process.

We want to hear your views and ideas

and these will be part of the mix when we're putting together more concrete plans for regulating the sharing economy in the coming months.

There's a genuine conversation to be had about the future of the sharing economy in Australia, and my party enters it with goodwill. I'll look forward to receiving your submissions. ❖

Make a submission by visiting www.andrewleigh.com/sharing_the_future



TOYOTA CAMRY HYBRID

taxi's a winner

The cost and environmental benefits of using Camry Hybrid cabs converted to run on Autogas were demonstrated to dozens of taxi industry leaders at the Australian Taxi Industry Association (ATIA) National Conference in Melbourne last month.

There are now more than 500 Hybrid Camry cabs running on the

Sprint Gas SVI Autogas system in Australia, allowing cab drivers to cut their running costs and improve their environmental responsibility.

The system saves drivers almost \$500 per month on fuel costs, when compared to the cost of running the same car on petrol. The converted Camry Hybrids also produce up to 15 per cent less carbon

emissions than those that run on petrol.

Unigas Senior Business Manager, John Coggins said the uptake of the LPG Hybrids by the Australian taxi industry to date proves that these gas-powered cabs are a sensible commercial choice for operators to cut their fuel costs. ❖

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world news



Belgium

By October 2016 all taxis in the Brussels Capital Region should be fitted with the most advanced taxi meter.

No longer will the drivers have to record their rest and driving times with pen and paper, local government gets more data and customers get more information about price and distance. More importantly: the Region will cover the cost of these new digital meters for which the Region forks out €3,2 million. So far only 40 of the 1270 Brussels taxis are fitted with a digital meter.

Brussels Mobility minister Pascal Smet insists on maximum transparency for the taxi sector. The new meters should enable card payments and use with smartphones.

For Smet this is a first step “in making the Brussels taxi sector more dynamic and customer friendly. At the moment I’m working on a Taxi Plan, which I will present to the government in due course. With this plan we are moving towards a better taxi service in Brussels.”

The meter should not only simplify the work of the taxi driver. As its data will be stored on an “external server” local government will also get a wealth of information about the local taxi activities and about local traffic.

www.taxiintelligence.com ❖



Japan

Toyota Mirai hydrogen fuel-cell car secures 1,500 orders in first month in Japan, production to be tripled in 2016.

The Japanese firm is building 700 customer examples of the car this year, but plans to extend that to 2,000 cars in 2016 and 3,000 in 2017.

The Mirai has so far proven a better-than-expected success after order books opened in Japan at the end of last year.

According to Toyota, around 60 per cent of the Mirai orders placed were from Japanese government/private fleet cus-



England

The Government is making £20 million (A\$38.8m) available to local authorities to support the rollout of ultra-low emission taxis across the UK and a further £25m (A\$48.5m) specifically for the Greater London Area.

The £25m (A\$48.5m) fund will help taxi drivers cover the cost of upgrading to a greener vehicle to meet forthcoming requirements.

All taxis will also qualify for the Government's plug-in car grant, which currently offers up to £5,000 off the cost of an eligible low emission vehicle.

Local authorities are invited to bid for feasibility studies to prepare for the rollout of these vehicles in their fleets. The full guidance is available here.

The news follows Geely's announcement outlining plans for a new £250 million (A\$485m) state of the art facility to produce the next generation of low-emission London Black Taxis.

Geely, which owns the London Taxi Company, was awarded £17 million (A\$33m) from the Government's Regional Growth Fund to build this facility, which will create 1,000 local jobs and ensure the London Black Taxi continues to be designed, developed and made in the UK.

These new taxis will comply with the new regulations being introduced by the Mayor of London that will require all London taxis to be zero-emission capable from January 2018.

Business Minister Matthew Hancock said: "Low emission vehicles are the future and show that we can meet our climate change obligations in a way that enhances technology.

"I'm looking forward to the roll-out of greener taxis across the UK and have no doubt that with the support of Geely this will happen very quickly."

Transport Minister Baroness Kramer said: "The low emission vehicle sector is going from strength to strength with demand in the UK up by over 300% last year, making the UK a leading market for this technology. Today's announcement means ultra low-emission taxis will be the smart choice for more taxi drivers and everyone will benefit from improved air quality and greener travel." ❀

tomers, with the other 40 per cent from private buyers.

But an increase in production of the Mirai hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicle sedan, will not speed up the timeline for the introduction of the ground-breaking sedan in Australia.

The lack of local infrastructure for hydrogen refuelling means Toyota Australia is sticking to its estimate that the commercial sale of a hydrogen-fuelled electric vehicle could be as far as a decade away here.

Toyota Australia spokesman Mike Breen said it was unlikely the emergence of hydrogen in Australia would be the result of the efforts of individual companies.

"From our point of view it will be industry-led," he said. "It won't just be Toyota, Hyundai, Mazda or whoever. Everyone will get together and lead the march to capital hill." ❀



HELP SAVE YOUNG PEOPLE'S LIVES

beyondblue has launched a guide to help parents and other family members reach out to young people at risk of suicide and to reduce Australia's tragic youth suicide rate.

The Family Guide for Youth Suicide Prevention, funded by security software makers Norton, offers advice on how to have a conversation with a young person who may be at risk, what factors place young people at risk and the warning signs to look for.

Suicide is the biggest killer of young people in Australia, with around 350 people aged between 15 and 24 dying by suicide in 2013, the latest year for which data is available. This is around one death a day, double the number killed in car accidents.

beyondblue CEO Georgie Harman said: "Families of young people are often really worried about them, but are too afraid to ask them if they are thinking of hurting themselves," she said. "That needs to change because talking about suicide does not cause suicide. In fact, asking questions may prevent suicide by showing the young person that someone cares.

"This Family Guide contains potentially life-saving information, along with other practical tips and evidence-based advice to help family members support at-risk young

people and steer them through adolescence and beyond. If you're concerned about a young person in your life, then you should read this guide. It may be exactly what's needed to help you save a life or change one for the better. beyondblue is incredibly grateful to Norton for funding this guide and for their ongoing support."

The free guide includes a four-minute video featuring young people talking to the camera about how a young person might act if they are experiencing suicidal thoughts, and what works and what doesn't work when it comes to youth suicide prevention.

The guide also features specific advice on how to help young people who are experiencing cyberbullying, which is a risk factor for youth suicide, and how to help them respond.

Mark Gorrie, head of Norton Sales, Pacific region, said: "Norton has a commitment to keeping people safe both online and offline. That is why we partnered with beyondblue more than two years ago and why we have been proud to fund the Fam-

ily Guide. Whether it's cyberbullying or something else entirely causing the distress, family members have an important role to play in helping young people through their low points, and this guide shows families exactly how to do this."

A young person in crisis can call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 or Lifeline on 13 11 14, 24 hours a day seven days a week. If a family member is concerned that a young person may be experiencing depression or anxiety symptoms, they can contact the beyondblue Support Service 24 hours a day, seven days a week on 1300 22 4636. There is also an online chat function at www.beyondblue.org.au between 3pm and midnight AEST, seven days a week, or people can send an email from the website for a response within 24 hours. ❀



Theatres of War

Wartime Entertainment and the Australian Experience

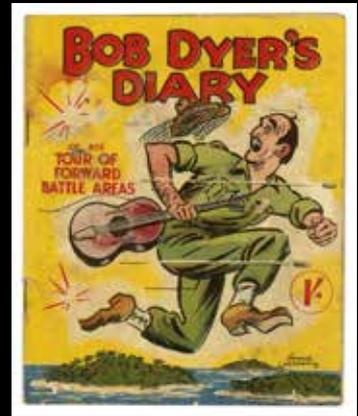
Arts Centre Melbourne



Paati McGrath (Newton) performing at Nui Dat, Vietnam, October 1967 - Courtesy of the Australian War Memorial

The exhibition looks at the transformative power of performance in war time – from shows for the troops to the makeshift instruments smuggled into prisoner of war camps. This haunting portrait of Australia and New Zealand’s shared history of conflict celebrates the Anzac spirit and the themes of courage, loss, kinship and, ultimately, a desire for peace.

The New Zealand Dance Company will bring to life a snapshot of war-time history in its new work *Rotunda* (7-9 May), blending exhilarating contemporary dance and the music of a live brass band. ❀



Bob Dyer's Diary of His Tour of Forward Battle Areas, 1945 - Cover illustration by George Needham - Arts Centre Melbourne, Performing Arts Collection



Programme for the revue *We're in the Navy Now*, Tivoli Circuit, Australia, 1941 - Arts Centre Melbourne, Performing Arts Collection



Gallipoli Centenary

25 April – 20 December 2015

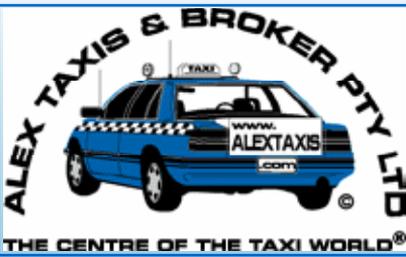
This quality medallion is in a solid brass box with actual sands from Anzac Cove.

Fashioned after the “Christmas gift tins” sent to troops by King George V’s daughter, Princess Mary in 1914, it is the affordable treasure people have been waiting for. Only 10,000 to be released. RRP \$59.99 ❀

CONFERENCES in Melbourne



2 - 3 May	INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE OF NUTRITION IN MEDICINE & HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE This is a unique and world-class international meeting bringing together the medical, nutrition and scientific communities to explore the clinical application of the latest research and new concepts in nutritional, genetic and genomic science.	Pullman Melbourne on the Park
7 - 8 May	SOLAR 2015 EXPO Showcasing the latest technologies from solar and renewable, energy efficiency and the energy storage industries. Solar 2015 is free to attend.	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
12 - 14 May	PMA FRESH CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE AND TRADE SHOW This is an information conference and trade show for the entire fresh fruit, vegetable, and floral value chains across Australia and New Zealand.	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
12 - 14 May	AITTS SUMMIT AND NET CONFERENCE Australian Intelligent Transport Systems Summit (AITTS) and the National electronic Tolling Conference (NeTC). This conference will bring together transportation engineers, manufacturers, consultants, business leaders, academia and government to hear about best practices, trends and emerging technology.	Crown Conference Centre
13 - 14 May	SOLAR 2015 EXHIBITION & CONFERENCE The 53rd annual Australian Solar Council Industry conference and exhibition will continue to highlight the people, projects and products that are driving our industry to new heights of innovation and excellence.	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
14 - 16 May	RISK - NATIONAL ARCHITECTURE CONFERENCE This conference will explore the troubled nexus, between the architectural necessity of risk-taking and a building environment predicated on the minimisation of risk.	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
17-20 May	APPEA CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION APPEA (the voice of Australia's gas and oil industry) conference brings together petroleum professionals, industry leaders, investors and policymakers from across Australia and around the world.	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
18 - 19 May	CHILD AWARE APPROACHES CONFERENCE This conference will explore innovative ways to respond early to the needs of children and families, and identify ways for diverse organisations, professions and communities to work more closely together to promote child safety and wellbeing. The conference will help to highlight the importance of working together to prevent harm to children.	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
26 - 27 May	SMART CONFERENCE AND EXPO 2015 SMART conference promises to deliver relevant supply chain & logistics practices, strategies and valuable information along with many networking opportunities directly to industry leaders.	Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre



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DAR

Major Events

Until 7 June		STRICTLY BALLROOM THE MUSICAL - Based on the much-loved Australian film. This brand new production has audiences dancing in the aisles in a kaleidoscope of colour and fun.	Her Majesty's Theatre 219 Exhibition Street Melbourne
Until 21 June		A GOLDEN AGE OF CHINA: QIANLONG EMPEROR (1736-1795) - Tells the story of China's foremost art collector Qianlong Emperor, one of China's most successful rulers and fourth and longest living emperor of the Qing dynasty. The exhibition displays a rich concentration of more than 120 works from the Palace Museum's art collection	National Gallery of Victoria, International 180 St Kilda Road Melbourne
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. In a first for an Australian art gallery, the National Gallery of Victoria celebrates this history with an exhibition of cars.	The Ian Potter Centre NGV Australia 1 Swanston Street Melbourne
Until 23 August		THE LION KING - Disney's beloved film is transformed into a spectacular theatrical experience that will redefine your expectations of theatre.	Regent Theatre 191 Collins Street Melbourne
25 April - 3 May		DAYLESFORD MACEDON PRODUCE HARVEST FESTIVAL - is a celebration of the harvest of Central Victoria, showcasing the region's abundant food and wine, and celebrating the best of our producers, farmers, provedores, restaurateurs and vignérons.	various venues in and around Daylesford
2 May		ELECTRIC RUN - The world's biggest and brightest night-time 5km run (or walk!) will light up Flemington Racecourse. This is a fun event for all ages and abilities. Participants can enjoy an electric night of running, walking or dancing across five routes and unique lands each with their own theme, lighting and soundtrack. At the finish line there'll be a huge after-party featuring local and international DJs.	Flemington Racecourse 500 Epsom Road Ascot Vale
9 May		FIESTA MALAYSIA 2015 - CELEBRATING DIVERSITY - is an exciting event that offers everyone the opportunity to experience a potpourri of sights, sound, taste and aroma of Malaysia. It is presented with a familiar open house style which is a common practice in various Malaysian festivals that see family, friends and even the whole neighbourhood coming together to celebrate with great fun and laughter.	Federation Square 2 Swanston Street Melbourne
10 May		THE MOTHER'S DAY CLASSIC FUN RUN/WALK has become a calendar must-do for thousands of families, friends and community groups who wish to support funding research into breast cancer.	Alexandra Gardens Boathouse Drive Melbourne
28 May - 7 June		MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL - an incredible program featuring some of the world's most important and iconic jazz artists, genre bending innovators, virtuosic instrumentalists and soulful singers. There will be an array of intimate club gigs, late-night art parties, film screenings, conversations, workshops, events for families and children and a wide range of free events.	From Melbourne's CBD to downtown Footscray

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ROAD CLOSURES IN Melbourne



Street	Dates	Details	Purpose
Market Street Melbourne	Closed until further notice	Full time closure of the northbound carriageway between Flinders Lane and Collins Street.	Road closure due to unsafe building
Blackwood Street and Flemington Road North Melbourne	7 to 17 May 2015 7.30am to 5.30pm weekdays; 8am to 5pm Saturday 10am to 5pm Sunday	Full closure of the Blackwood Street northbound carriageway between Courtney Street and Flemington Road. Partial closure on the Flemington Road westbound service road between Blackwood and Wreckyn streets.	Water Main Upgrade Works
Cardigan Street Carlton	2 May - 8am to 3pm	Full closure of northbound carriageway between Victoria and Queensberry streets, including full closure of the western footpath.	Crane lift of wall panels
Therry Street Melbourne	11 April to 11 May 8am to 5pm Saturdays 10am to 5pm Sundays	Full closure of westbound carriageway between Victoria and Elizabeth streets.	Power Utility Works
Little Collins and Swanston Streets Melbourne	20 April to 12 June 8pm to 4am Sunday to Thursday	Full closure of the Little Collins Street carriageway between Russell and Elizabeth streets. Partial closure on the Swanston Street carriageway (both directions) at its intersection with Little Collins Street.	Gas Utility Works
Keppel and Cardigan Streets Carlton	Friday 24 April to Sunday 24 May 7am to 5pm	Closure and traffic detours at roundabout intersection.	Power Utility Works
Bourke Street Melbourne	27 April to 27 June	Partial closure between Russell and Exhibition Streets	Manhole installation works
Dorcas and Wells Streets Southbank	27 April to 31 July 7am to 5pm	Closures and traffic detours at roundabout intersection. Detours via St Kilda Road, Coventry Street, Kings Way and Bank Street.	Road resurfacing works
Russell Street Melbourne	Saturday 16 May to Sunday 17 May 2015	Partial closure between Little Collins and Bourke Streets	Tower crane installation

DIGITAL EDITION

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Savid Taxis.....	13, 16		



Metropolitan Taxi Club

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ST KILDA FILM FESTIVAL



Thursday 21 – Saturday 30 May 2015

This year's festival will feature some of Australia's best emerging and established filmmakers, producers and directors. The St Kilda Film Festival supports the Australian film industry and showcases exceptional films by emerging artists, providing the most comprehensive overview of the national short film industry.

Thursday 21 May Program Launch

With a glamorous red carpet event this year's festival program will be launched at the magnificent Palais Theatre, offering an exclusive sample of the program's best short films for more than 3000 film-lovers and special guests.

The Festival will screen the Top 100 short film entries with a prize pool that totals over \$40,000 worth of cash and in-kind craft awards. Award-winning films from the St Kilda Film Festival will be eligible for consideration in the OSCARS® Short Film and Documentary Awards.

Celebrating 32nd Anniversary

The St Kilda Film Festival's program will be hosted at the St Kilda Town Hall for the first time and this venue offers a unique cinematic experience boasting state of the art sound and screening technology with historical theatre seating.