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TAXITALK

MAGAZINE

Official journal of the Victorian Taxi Association
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APRIL 2011

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suspicious websites
Hi, I don't know if this is useful but I saw something strange at my workplace.
I overheard them planning something... anyway I thought I'd better call.
I overheard them planning something...
It's unusual for him to be receiving deliveries like that, especially at that time of night.
I felt like I had to let you know.
The name on his credit card didn't match the one on his passport.
They have a lot of pool supplies in their courtyard but they don't have room for a pool.
Hi, I wouldn't usually call, but I overheard something that sounded suspicious.
The name on his credit card didn't match the one on his passport...
I was working in this house and there was a lot of expensive electrical gizmos that looked a little suspicious to me.
My boyfriend is involved in something suspicious...
I just don't want him to get into trouble.
I saw an unusual large order, really expensive, and he wanted to pay cash.
It's unusual for him to be receiving deliveries like that, especially at that time of night.
They kept asking me questions about our security systems... well, unusually... I can't shake the feeling something's wrong.
The name on his credit card didn't match the one on his passport.
I know this person
The name on his credit card didn't match the one on his passport.
Hi, I wouldn't usually call, but I overheard something that sounded suspicious.
It was an unusually large order, really expensive, and he wanted to pay cash.
I wouldn't usually call, but I overheard something that sounded suspicious.
He just didn't show up for work and when I called him his number was disconnected.
suspicious websites.
The name on his credit card didn't match the one on his passport.
I know this person
suspicious websites.
I know this person
suspicious websites.
It's unusual for him to be receiving deliveries like that, especially at that time of night.
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My boyfriend is involved in something suspicious...
I just don't want him to get into trouble.

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Australian Government



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Contents

- 4 Victorian Taxi Association editorial
Living like a mushroom? Not a good place to be.
6 Victorian Taxi Industry Commission
A new statutory body will be created.
10 From the Victorian Taxi Directorate
An update on the current happenings within the VTD.
14 25th Melbourne International Comedy Festival
March 30 - April 24 various venues around Melbourne.
15 TITV training schedule
Details of upcoming Taxi Operator Training Courses.
16 Potential driver seminars
Will be held at VTA's premises.
22 Temporary sponsored migration
Migration law is an area constantly changing.
24 Drive sensibly at all times
Prevention is better than cure.
26 Classifieds
Cabs, drivers, equipment, licences, etc. wanted and for sale.
28 Victorian taxi statistics
Licence assignments, transfers and issues for the month.
30 Depression and diabetes
A two-way relationship.
34 Yellow Cabs golf news
Update on what is happening in taxi golf world.
36 Information boost for Victorian small businesses
282 workshops and seminars on offer in 2011.
38 ABC NewsRadio quiz
Test your general knowledge by taking our quiz.



Living like a mushroom? not a good place to be

It is not very often that I publicly compliment the media, so it might come as a surprise when I say that the article by Stephen McMahon in the Herald Sun of Saturday 5 March seemed to me to be a pretty good overview of the first 100 days of the Coalition Government. In so saying, I am not commenting on what has or hasn't happened overall, I am merely suggesting that there is a high degree of accuracy in what he wrote.

Stephen suggested that whilst the public might perceive little action and change, there is a great deal going on behind the scenes which the public does not see. As one who travels through circles of contacts in Government, lobby and business groups, and businesses interfacing with Government I can say that Stephen is quite right.

What is clear is that the new Government is not rushing in or burning and slashing. There seems to be calmness and resolve about the pace of change. This can be frustrating, but not as frustrating as silly kneejerk actions or reactions.

Having said this, it also has to be said that the VTA is somewhat miffed that the Government has not picked up the ball on the economic state of the taxi industry and awarded a fare increase. They know and we know that Victoria's taxi fares are between 25% and 29% behind NSW, that taxi fares in Victoria have not increased since December 2008, that the cost of living continues to rise, and drivers work for less than \$10 an hour.

The VTA believes that the whole taxi fare setting model in Victoria is a lemon and needs to be fixed, but this is no reason to delay increasing fares right now by 10% as a "down payment" on what should shake out to be full blown and accurate fare review.

The world has not stood completely still for "things taxi". The most obvious happenings are the announced creation of a new Victorian Taxi Industry Commission (see separate article) and the decision not to persist with the BSX/NSX based taxi licence trading scheme.

The VTA has always been opposed to the licence trading scheme brought into being by the former Government. Right from the start the main VTA opposition stemmed from the likely increase in administration costs, the accelerator effect on increasing assignment fees, and the potential for graft and price gouging.

Unfortunately it has taken around nine years to remove this millstone of both the notion and the being of the BSX/NSX based licence trading scheme from around the neck of the industry. I just hope that the damage done to the industry by the licence trading scheme is not irreparable.

By the time this edition of *Taxi Talk* is released, the VTD should have advised all affected taxi licence holders and taxi assignee operators of the new rules and procedures. These can also be seen on the VTA website via a link to the DOT website, click on www.victaxi.com.au and follow the news link.

The VTA appreciated the VTD invitation for it to contribute to recasting the processes to be initially used after the end of the BSX/NSX based system. The starting point for the VTA was to dump the lot and return to what was in place before the trading scheme was introduced. It was also important for the VTA that Government (through the DOT/VTD) take responsibility for the whole process of licence assignments and transfers and not rely on a third party to do what is necessary to establish the integrity and fairness of the system.

Finally and on a lighter note, I was particularly tickled by Stephen McMahon's line: "Bureaucrats complain of being kept in the dark about policy and ministers being unwilling to make decisions". Perhaps these same bureaucrats will now be more empathetic with those who work with Government from the outside and how they feel when they are kept in the dark or are seeking timely decisions. Living like a mushroom is not a good place to be.

Neil Sach VTA CEO ❖

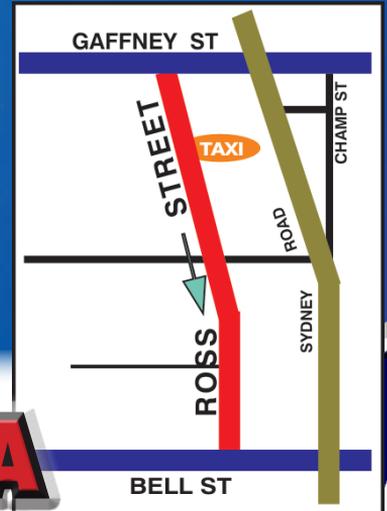
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Victorian Taxi Industry Commission

Taxi Talk readers will know that last month I wrote about the prospect of a taxi commission. At the time I suggested that such a commission could be something from a short term commission of inquiry right through to a statutory body to look at and look after all matters taxi (and hire car).

The Government's proposal for a taxi commission is not new news as it was talked about by the Coalition before and since the November election, and indeed was Liberal Party policy for the 2006 state election in the guise of a Taxi Unit.

What is new news is that in a speech to the Melbourne Transport Forum (MTF) on 9 March, the Minister for Public Transport, Terry Mulder, elaborated on what is envisaged by the Government. This was reported the next day in *The Age* and the *Herald Sun* – even

though not accurately.

From what we now know the proposal appears to be to create the Victorian Taxi Industry Commission (VTIC) as a statutory body outside of the Department of Transport with the role and functions of the VTD being absorbed into it, as will VTD staff and possibly some other DOT staff.

The stated aim of the Minister is to have VTIC formally and fully in place by the end of this year, but this will depend upon legislation being developed, scrutinised and passed through the Parliament.

However, perhaps it is possible for an "informal" VTIC to operate before this happens. Powers and responsibilities would still reside with the DOT but a group of "commissioners" could exist to guide the Government's taxi policy making along with the DOT/MTD pro-

viding the necessary support and response.

In his speech to the MTF the Minister referred to fundamental changes to the structure of the industry. He made the point that the structure is complex and there are many participants with their "hand on the fare box". He certainly has got this right.

It has been suggested to me by someone close to the action that not everyone will be happy with the structural changes being considered. I have no doubt that this will be the case and there could be some nasties lurking around the corner to cause some industry stakeholders some grief.

In time we shall see as the story continues.

Neil Sach VTA CEO ❖



2011 Australian Taxi Conference

1 - 5 May, 2011 at Hotel Grand Chancellor Hobart, Davey Street, Hobart, Tasmania

Conference sessions are planned to address a range of important industry issues including the driver shortage, driver training, energy supply and the future outlook, LPG excise, taxi licence regulation and operation (including the USA), exhibitor presentations, financial and retirement planning, and industry reports.

The VTA's executive officer policy and communications, David Samuel, will be speaking at the conference about taking a proactive approach to driver shortages.

For more information on this conference go to www.atia.com.au and click on Conferences. You can also register online.

The VTA can also assist with most enquiries – talk with Linda Constantelos on 03 9676 2635.



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New Taxi Industry Commission

will look at the industry's problems

Statements made in March by Public Transport Minister Terry Mulder regarding the future of the taxi industry were welcomed by the VTA. Indeed, some of the actions already undertaken by the new Government were also welcomed. The dismantling of the flawed licence trading platform was a real step forward for the structural integrity of the industry.

Amongst other announcements was a commitment to establish a "Taxi Industry Commission" to look at the root causes of the problems that have afflicted our industry. While the VTA is happy to work with the Government on these matters, as should every industry stakeholder, we cannot neglect some of the short term issues that need to be resolved.

At the top of this list is a fare rise. Fares have not moved since 2008. This is simply unacceptable and the lack of action in this area unpalatable. Cost of living prices have risen over this period so any notion that taxi drivers and taxi operators do not face these pressures is simply offensive.

This is particularly the case when other modes of fare based trans-

port continue to have their margins increased. Simply, it's time for the Government to act.

In respect to the longer term issues like the establishment of a Taxi Industry Commission, it is vital the industry is heavily involved. The Government must remember that we are a commercially funded industry, and we do not rely on direct Government subsidies or handouts to provide the service we do.

Commercial considerations must be involved in any regulatory discussion. The industry cannot afford to be absorbing the cost of any more inadequate regulation, and we also don't want to see unnecessary costs associated with it imposed upon our customers.

Finally, consultation is vital to give Government action legitimacy. Like any industry, if stakeholders aren't consulted and change is forced upon them, it is less likely to be successful. So far the Minister has shown a genuine desire to consult and work with all legitimate industry stakeholders – the VTA welcomes this fresh approach.

David Samuel
VTA Policy & Communications ♣



DAVID SAMUEL
VTA Policy and Communications



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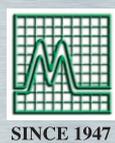


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From the Victorian Taxi Directorate

Transferring and assigning licences

The Department of Transport will not be extending its agreement with BSX Services Pty Ltd (BSX) to manage the trading arrangements associated with the transfer and assignment of the Melbourne taxi licences.

For further information about the new arrangements, which will take effect 28 March 2011, visit www.taxi.vic.gov.au.

The website will include all the relevant documents, including licensing forms and legal contracts, as well as an up-to-date public listing of all licence transfers and assignments.

Launch of VTD website licensing section

The VTD has launched a new, dedicated commercial passenger vehicle licensing section on its website. The section will allow visitors to access all forms required when applying and transferring metropolitan and country hire car, special purpose vehicle and restricted hire vehicle licences. Visit www.taxi.vic.gov.au

You have to let us know when circumstances change

You must let the VTD know if you are planning to take leave from your business for a period of time. You must also nominate a relevant person to be the primary contact for the VTD in your absence. To formalise this arrangement, you will need to submit to the VTD a completed Relevant Person form which is available from www.taxi.vic.gov.au

Creating two-way dialogue with industry

It's fair to say that everyone has an opinion on how to make the taxi industry better. It is pleasing that many industry participants want to be actively involved in contributing to the development of our industry.

As the regulator of the taxi industry, the Victorian Taxi Directorate (VTD) is committed to ensuring that all



PETER CORCORAN
General Manager
Victorian Taxi Directorate

voices are heard and considered when it comes to taxi-related matters.

With this in mind, I encourage industry participants to consider joining two key advisory groups facilitated by the VTD – the Taxi Driver Advisory Group (TDAG) and the Taxi Operator Advisory Group (TOAG).

Since its establishment in 2008, TDAG has provided the VTD with a full complement of views and perspectives on what works and what needs to be improved, through feedback from a broad cross section of drivers. The group has also given drivers a forum to talk about issues that matter to them.

All TDAG positions are currently up for renewal, which creates a unique opportunity for other drivers to step in and make their voices heard.

The VTD is also setting up a Taxi Operator Advisory Group to create a forum for a constructive, two-way dialogue between the VTD and operators on operator-specific issues.

Applications to join both groups close Friday, 15 April 2011, so if you are looking to get involved, I strongly suggest that you apply as soon as possible.

To apply and view the relevant selection criteria, visit www.taxi.vic.gov.au ❖

EXPO for taxi cameras

At the time of writing only one camera system has been approved by the VTD that complies with the 2009 specification. The VTA is aware of three or possibly four other companies seeking approval for their product and it is hoped that these will be approved by the end of March.

This being the case the VTA is planning to hold an Expo at its premises where operators wishing to view first hand approved products in the market place will be able to do so.

Similar to the WAT Expo last year, this will provide an opportunity to not only view products but to speak directly to the suppliers as well.

The timing of this Expo will hopefully be around the second week of May. Operators will be advised when arrangements are firmed up.



Paul Theobald VTA Stakeholder Engagement ❁

Taxi Driver Advisory Group

Are you a taxi driver who wants to make a difference to the industry?

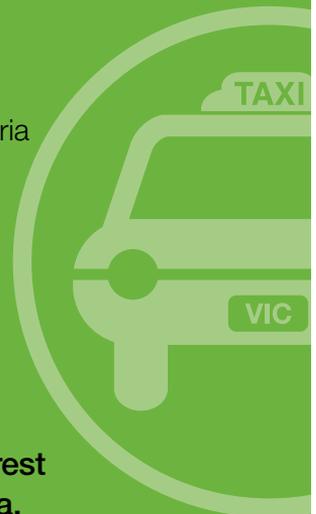
Positions on the Taxi Driver Advisory Group are coming up for renewal and current drivers, including those from country Victoria and those with less than two years taxi driving experience, are encouraged to apply.

The group provides an opportunity for a broad cross-section of drivers to offer feedback on taxi-related matters, policies and initiatives directly to the Victorian Taxi Directorate (VTD).

Only a limited number of places are available.

Visit www.taxi.vic.gov.au or phone the VTD on **1800 638 802 (toll-free)** to obtain an Expression of Interest form and further information about the selection criteria.

Applications must be received by the VTD by **Friday 15 April 2011**.



DOT5758/11

Metropolitan WATs training now up and running



By the time you read this article the first Taxi Industry Training Victoria (TITV) metropolitan course of the new nationally recognized unit TLIC4009A - Provide wheelchair accessible taxi services to passengers with disabilities, will have commenced.

TITV would like to thank 13CABS and Geelong Taxi Network, for their assistance and feedback in piloting the draft of the new unit.

The development of a number of innovative training resources and access to taxi industry infrastructure, including communication centres and depots, provides TITV students the opportunity to learn in a virtual operating environment.

Importantly, the new unit puts a greater emphasis on ethical behaviour to improve service standards and to avoid any suggestion of harassment, abuse or intimidation towards passengers with disabilities. To achieve this outcome the new unit has an additional element not covered in the previous course.

To enrol in the TITV metropolitan WAT driver course, contact 13CABS on 03 9277 3700 or Silver Top Taxis on 03 8413 8117.



Debbie Howden , TITV Manager ❀

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RAW



Australia's most-prized open mic comedy competition has seen a marathon effort from this year's competitors who've sweated it out during heats and finals nationwide to qualify for the National Grand Final at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

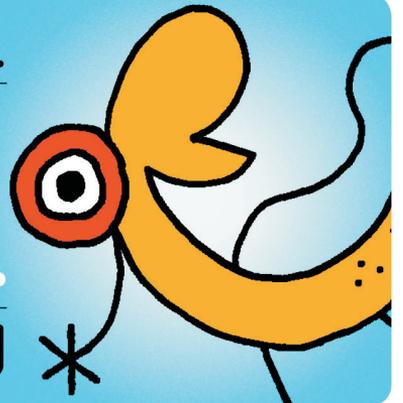
Amid the tears (of laughter), the tragedy and the triumph, only one comedian will emerge as champion of this race – 2011 RAW Comedy Winner – and pocket the prize of a trip to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

But before that baton is passed, they'll complete feats of performance-enhancing levels of funny at the Grand Final, as they give it all they've got to stand high on the podium as the newest comedy hero of this proud nation. Come and see them now so you can say you saw them then. At the Melbourne Town Hall, Sunday 10 April 5pm. ❀

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	2	Tues 5 April		2	Tues 10 May
	3	Wed 6 April		3	Wed 11 May
192	1	Mon 18 April	194	1	Mon 23 May
	2	Tues 19 April		2	Tues 24 May
	3	Wed 20 April		3	Wed 25 May



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Potential driver seminars



As the VTA has discussed on numerous occasions in the recent past, the Victorian taxi industry currently faces a shortage of people interested in driving a taxi. The VTA has also highlighted the reasons it believes there is a shortage of drivers. Among the reasons are the slow administrative processing of driver accreditation for existing drivers and potential new drivers.

Of the administrative processes the

VTA is concerned about, one stands out - the interview process for potential drivers who have not held a full Victorian driver licence for at least 12 months. This interview process, which is currently administered by the VTD, is a bit of mystery. What has become clear is that the questions directed at prospective drivers appear to relate to customer service and the applicants knowledge of Melbourne.

This concerns the VTA given that these are key components of the course in taxi driving and the applicant is attempting to gain permission (the training passport) to undertake this training. Expecting them to understand something they have not yet been trained in, seems somewhat unreasonable.

The VTA remains of the view that driver licensing of drivers, including taxi drivers, should remain the domain of VicRoads. If a driver is able to pass a VicRoads driving test that exempts them from the 12 months rule, then they should be treated as any other applicant seeking a training passport from the VTD to undertake driver training. In response to its concerns about this process and to ensure the Victorian public get the taxi drivers they deserve, the VTA is going to undertake Potential Driver Seminars that will be made available to any new potential taxi driver.

This will be done in conjunction with arguing for either the reform or removal of the interview process. The seminars will be designed to assist those seeking to enter the industry to better understand what is expected of them as a Victorian taxi driver.

The seminars (briefing sessions) will be held at the VTA's office in Port Melbourne, completely free of charge and voluntary. The seminars will include a discussion with an existing driver trainer and current taxi driver. Both will be there to assist the candidate understand what can be an overwhelming experience.

Please contact Linda or Niamh at the VTA on 9676 2635 to find out when the seminars are being held. ♣

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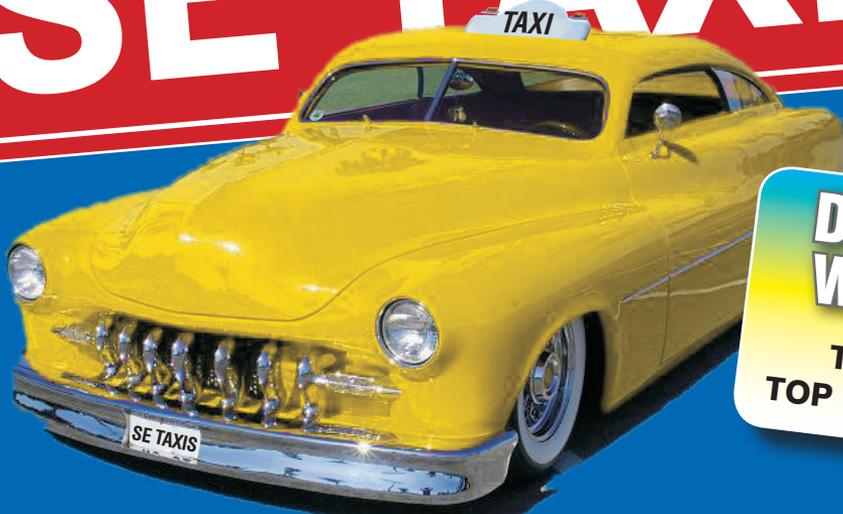
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IMAX Melbourne Museum, Carlton Gardens from 8 April

Born to be Wild 3D is an inspired story of love, dedication and the remarkable bond between humans and animals. This film documents orphaned orang-utans and elephants and the extraordinary people who rescue and raise them — saving endangered species one life at a time.

Stunningly captured in IMAX 3D, Born to be Wild 3D is a heartwarming adventure transporting moviegoers into the lush rainforests of Borneo with world-renowned primatologist Dr. Birute Galdikas and across the rugged Kenyan savannah with celebrated elephant authority Dame Daphne Sheldrick.

Together with their teams, they rescue, rehabilitate and return these incredible animals back to the wild.

To celebrate the launch of Born to be Wild 3D, during the autumn school holidays IMAX Melbourne Museum will run activities for families.

Visit the IMAX between 11am and 3pm and join in the fun and you could be in the running to win one of two Friends of the Zoo Family Memberships. ♣



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Public Relations support

Like all industry stakeholders, the VTA is tired of seeing our industry run down in the media and constantly unfairly accused of not fulfilling its obligations to its customers and the public generally.

The often misguided and unsubstantiated commentary from commercial radio and television networks does tremendous damage to the way the consumer views our product.

In response to this, the VTA has appointed Ellis Jones, a public relations and marketing firm, to try and help us paint a more accurate picture.

The focus of the project will be to help the public better understand the vital role taxis play, and can play, in the community.

We will bring you updates and news about the project and its successes. ♣



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The Avenue transformed



Road Safety Inspections (RSI) which has operated from the site colloquially known as 'The Avenue' (433 Williamstown Road Port Melbourne) as long as anyone can remember, has transformed itself into a new state-of-the-art bus and taxi inspection facility. Opened on 10th December 2010 by Minister for Public Transport and Roads, Mr Terry Mulder MP, this \$1.6m redevelopment has boosted its level of relevance to both accredited and registered Victorian bus and taxi operators. The new facility enables buses and taxis to have their inspection and registration requirements satisfied on the spot.

BusVic and RSI Director Chris Lowe said 'the previous facility had well and truly served its purpose. Industry looked to us to ensure the continuity of this vital service and this investment by industry is testimony to our unwavering commitment to public safety' said Mr Lowe.

'There are plenty of competitors in the bus and taxi inspection market but being owned by industry and for the industry enables us to achieve our objective of delivering fast, efficient service, integral advice at a competitive price' said Lowe.

'Industry is showing great support for our commercial endeavours as they know any surpluses are ploughed straight back into industry re-investment' Lowe said.

The re-development took 3 years to bring to fruition, from planning to practical completion. RSI performs 3000 inspections per annum. The new facility is also receiving significant demand from operators of '9+' vehicles, now considered 'registered' operators as they have their mandatory annual safety inspection completed in order to apply for registration with the Safety Director. ♣



BusVic Executive Director Chris Lowe and Minister Mulder



RSI Manager Brett Gibbs



Minister Mulder and BusVic President, Pat Ryan

Temporary sponsored migration

Most people will spend days, weeks and even months researching their visa options, their eligibility and the process involved with lodging a visa application.

Migration law is an area that constantly changes and during this time, a requirement of a particular visa may be altered by the Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Changes may even occur on the day you intend to lodge your visa application!

Most people lodge their application without being aware of changes that may have occurred since they last reviewed the visa conditions. Changes that may seem minor or insignificant, such as a change in the version of the visa application form, may mean that the visa application is returned or refused.

Subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) visa

The subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) visa is a popular visa choice for employers seeking to employ overseas employees in an eligible occupation and position for short term period of up to four years. It is also a good choice for employees because continuous employment with this visa may allow them to be sponsored for a permanent resident visa in the future.

Changes to subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) visa

On 15 February 2011, the Department of Immigration and Citizenship introduced changes that impact upon the subclass 457 Business (Long Stay) visa. If you are about to lodge this application, you must make sure that it complies with these changes.

The new changes include ...

1. Four new occupations that may be sponsored:

- Sugar Cane Grower
- Small Engine Mechanic
- Real Estate Agency Principal
- Wool Buyer

2. Seven occupations that may no longer be sponsored:

- Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers
- Private Investigator
- Beauty Therapist
- Bookmaker
- Insurance Consultant
- Production Assistant
- Motion Picture Projectionist

3. The following occupations are now restricted:

- Café or Restaurant Manager excludes Fast Food or Takeaway Food Service positions.
- University Lecturer roles must

be for positions of Research Associate or Research Fellow at a university.

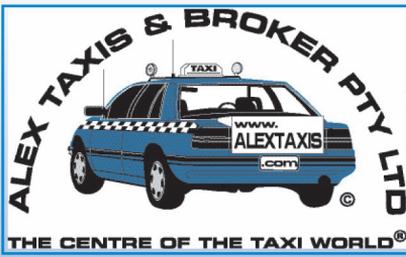
- Butcher or Smallgoods maker excludes slaughtering animals or roles that primarily involve slicing, boning or packaging meat in a non-retail environment.

Further changes were made to the categories of applicants exempt from the English language proficiency requirement and the salary paid to applicants exempt from the English language requirement.

Next Edition

If you have any migration questions you would like answered, feel free to send them to achambers@kligers.com.au Selected questions may be answered by a Migration Lawyer and Registered Migration Agent in future editions of *Taxi Talk*.♣





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Drive sensibly at ALL times

Drivers are constantly being reminded that speed is a prime cause of traffic accidents, but perhaps we might qualify this by adding "in the prevailing circumstances".

Driving at 75 km/h in a 60 zone, though a breach of the law, may not in itself be dangerous if visibility is good, there is little or no other traffic on the road and the vehicle is in roadworthy condition.

But by the same token, even 30 or 40 km/h in a rainstorm or on a road shrouded in smoke from a bushfire could have disastrous consequences.

Driving approximately 25 per cent faster than other traffic increases the risk of an accident by up to 10 times, and results in far greater impact.

Apart from other factors, such as alcohol-impaired driving and fatigue, speeding gives you less time to react in an emergency - and gives other road users less time to take evasive action. In addition, your vehicle becomes less stable when cornering, manoeuvring and braking at high speed.

Stopping distances are drastically altered with speed. On average it takes about three-quarters of a second to react to an emergency situation. This reaction time will add two metres to a vehicle's stopping distance at only 10 km/h - but at 100 km/h it increases to 20 metres, or some four car lengths. With night driving, stopping distances can be greater than the visibility provided by the headlights.

As the old saying goes, "Prevention is better than cure". It's a good idea to give yourself adequate time to travel between destinations- with an allowance for unforeseen circumstances - so that there's no need or reason to speed.

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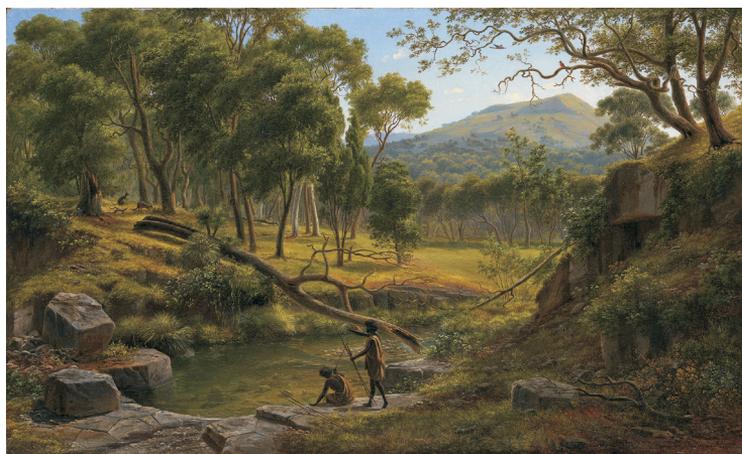
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Eugene von Guérard

born Austria 1811, lived in Australia 1852-82, Europe 1882-1901, died England 1901
Warrenheip Hills near Ballarat 1854 oil on canvas on plywood 46.0 x 75.5 cm National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne Purchased, 1977 (A32-1977)

Thank You!

Anita

On 1 July 1986, Anita Jennison joined the staff of the VTA in an administrative role.

Now after nearly 25 years, Anita has decided that it's time to do something different and something that is more for her and husband Lance, and no doubt the children and three grandchildren.

Many people across the Victorian taxi industry (and indeed some interstate) will be aware of Anita and the role she played in administering VTA programs and events, and keeping the VTA books in a precise and accurate order.

The VTA wishes Anita all the very best for the future and extends its many, many thanks for her many years of loyal and dedicated service to the VTA and the Victorian taxi industry.



Neil Sach VTA CEO ❖

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LICENCE TRANSFERS

metro taxis 19
 urban 1
 country taxis 3
 hire car licences 22
 special licences 3

LICENCES ISSUED

taxi licences 37
 hire car licences 4
 special vehicles 1
 rest. hire vehicles 13

LICENCES ASSIGNED

(February 2010-February 2011)
 total = 1,181

Number of Taxi Licences March 2011

METROPOLITAN 4,101
 (including 302 WAT vehicles)

OUTER SUBURBAN 672
 (including Country)
 (including 141 WAT vehicles)

URBAN 237
 (Ballarat - Bendigo - Geelong)
 (including 35 WAT vehicles)

TOTAL 5,010
 (including 478 WAT vehicles)

NUMBER OF DRIVERS

Active drivers 16,000 APPROX
 Certified drivers 25,000 APPROX

HIRE CARS

transfer value

\$56,234

TAXI

\$520,600

transfers

Compliance outcomes (1-28 February 2011)

Taxi Inspections 2,384
 Rectification Notices 307
 Infraction Notices 130
 Notices of Unroadworthy 28
 Official Warnings 26

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For the most up-to-date information about presentation times, tickets and special events, visit www.melbourneaquarium.com.au, and don't forget, kids under three enter FREE! ♣

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Depression and diabetes a two-way relationship

People with diabetes know that it's crucial to keep a close check on blood sugar levels and strive for good physical fitness. In recent years, however, a more complex link between diabetes and mental health has emerged.

Research Adviser to beyondblue: the national depression initiative, Professor David Clarke, says although depression and anxiety commonly co-exist with serious chronic illnesses (i.e. heart disease, cancer, asthma), diabetes is a special case.

"The level of disability caused by having diabetes and depression is more severe than with any other chronic illness," Prof Clarke says. "We don't know exactly why that is, but we do know that the body's response to stress is the release of cortisol, which increases blood pressure and blood sugar, and therefore tends to make diabetes worse." On the other hand, diabetes can worsen symptoms of depression and anxiety. Some people

react to a diagnosis of diabetes with feelings of denial, anger, guilt or grief. While these feelings about diagnosis are normal, for some people they do not pass with time and can lead to depression and/or anxiety.

The rigorous routine required to manage diabetes (blood glucose testing, medication, healthy eating plans and exercise) can take its toll and leave a person feeling frustrated, fed up, overwhelmed or "burnt out", leading to mental health problems.

If help is not sought for these symptoms, it can lead to people abandoning their health routine and going into a downward spiral, Prof Clarke says.

"Untreated depression and anxiety make it harder to deal with everyday tasks and can affect a person's ability to manage diabetes," he says. "This means that depression can increase the likelihood of developing diabetes complications.

"If someone with diabetes suspects they might have depression or anxiety, it's vital to talk to a General Practitioner or mental health professional.

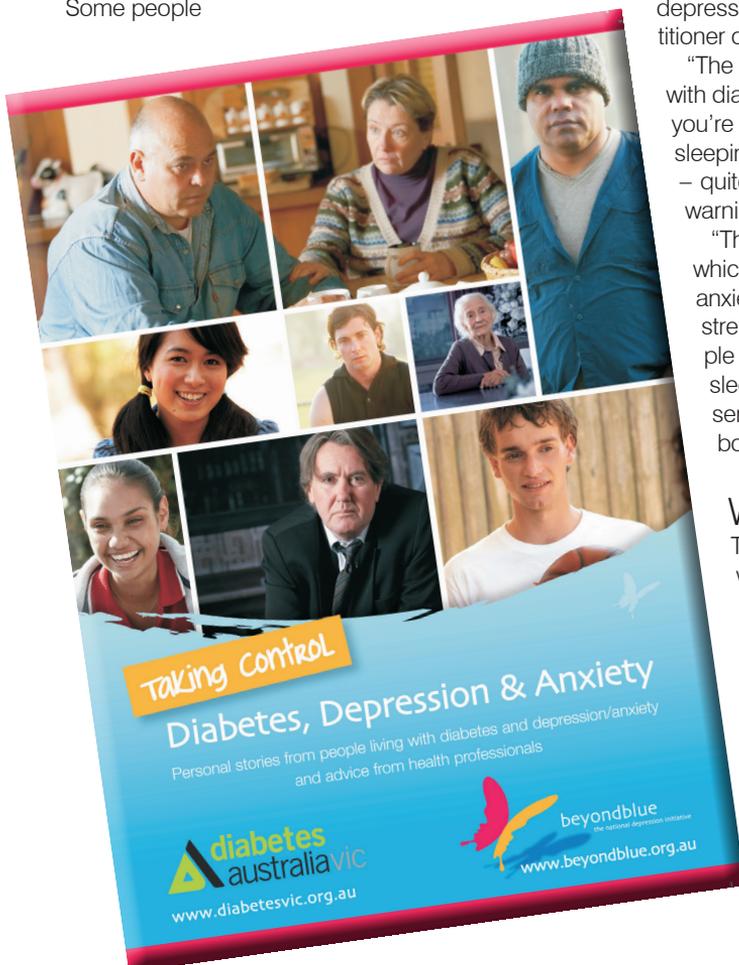
"The signs of depression and anxiety in a person with diabetes are the same as in anyone else. Perhaps you're under stress, not coping, getting angry easily, sleeping too much or too little, or drinking too much – quite often other people in your life will notice the warning signs before you do.

"There are talking therapies and medications which are effective treatments for depression and anxiety, but the most important thing is to reduce stress and to learn ways of coping. Fortunately, simple lifestyle changes such as getting good regular sleep and exercise, and eating well, will improve a sense of wellbeing and help alleviate symptoms of both depression and diabetes."

What is diabetes?

There are several types of diabetes. All people with diabetes have one thing in common – too much sugar, or glucose, in their blood. Their blood glucose levels are higher than normal because insulin, the hormone that helps the body use glucose for energy, is:

- no longer made by the body as the insulin-producing cells in the pancreas are destroyed by the body's immune system (type 1 diabetes) The exact cause of type 1 diabetes is not yet known, but it has a strong family link. The role of lifestyle factors in cause is uncertain, although maintaining a healthy lifestyle is very important in helping



to manage type 1 diabetes³; or not produced in sufficient quantities and/or the body is not able to use it properly (type 2 diabetes) While there is no single cause of type 2 diabetes, there are well-established risk factors. You are at a higher risk of getting type 2 diabetes if you³:

- have a family history of diabetes
- are older (over 55 years of age) - the risk increases as we age
- are over 45 years of age and are overweight
- are over 45 years of age and have high blood pressure
- are over 35 years of age and are from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
- are over 35 years of age and are from Pacific Island, Indian subcontinent or Chinese cultural background
- are a woman who has

given birth to a child over 4.5 kgs (9 lbs), or had gestational diabetes when pregnant, or had a condition known as Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome.

High blood glucose levels can lead to diabetes complications – eye and kidney disease and nerve damage – as well as an increased risk of heart disease. Treatments are therefore needed to keep blood glucose levels close to normal. Eating healthily, being physically active and losing excess weight can help with this, but oral medication or injected insulin is often needed as well.

The facts

- Around half the people with Type 2 diabetes have depression and one in seven has generalised anxiety disorder.
- Depression and anxiety are less common among people with Type 1 diabetes, although one in eight of these people will experience depression.¹
- Women with either Type 1 or

Type 2 diabetes are more likely than men to experience depression and anxiety.¹

- People with symptoms of depression tend to be less physically active, eat more and be more likely to smoke, which are all risk factors for developing Type 2 diabetes.²
- The important thing to remember for anyone experiencing symptoms of depression or anxiety is to seek help early. Effective treatments are available and with the right treatment, most people recover.

Resources

Visit the beyondblue website at www.beyondblue.org.au or call the information line on 1300 22 4636 to download or order Fact Sheet 19 – Depression and diabetes or the free DVD Taking Control: Diabetes, Depression and Anxiety, which is aimed at helping people with diabetes, their carers and health professionals to recognise the symptoms of depression and anxiety.

References:

- 1 Clarke DM & Currie KC (2009) Depression, anxiety and their relationship with chronic diseases: a review of the epidemiology, risk and treatment evidence. Medical Journal of Australia Supplement 190 (7): S54-S60.
- 2 Gebel E (2008) Double trouble with diabetes and depression. Diabetes Forecast p23.
- Edwards H (2008) Diabetes and depression: an important connection. Diabetes Management Journal 23: 12.
- 3 Diabetes Australia ✦

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YELLOW CABS GOLF NEWS



Player with the most strokes - 236
Peter Marinos from Live Payments

After all the talk, Yellows big charity day arrived and we had a rough idea how many players would turn up. We were looking at around 60 players and we were pleasantly surprised that 72 players arrived to make the day a very successful one. With all that heavy rain leading up to the big day, Cranbourne golf course was in fantastic condition.

As we had never run such an event before we now appreciate the hard work it takes running National and State Championships. Playing golf is the easy part but at the end of the day it was all about raising money for Peter Mac. Once all the winners were announced and the prizes handed out, we drew the taxi golf biggest raffle ever.

I would like to thank the following organisations for their kind generosity and support. Live payments for being our foundation sponsor, Celebrations Cellars, Berwick Springs and five of Melbourne's trunk groups Phone Cabs, Elite, E.D.A, Network

and Prestige.

The VTGA kindly donated with a cheque that left everybody stunned. Kevin Tait (NST) handed over a cheque for \$3000. Here we thought that if we raise a couple of grand we have done well. The final amount is \$7344.50, Next year it will take some beating but we have already started planning next year.

After all the dust settled with the charity day it was back to the drawing board after we lost to Peninsula. Robbie warned a few players to pull their socks up. Unfortunately North's only had three players, so one of the first three players had to win. Biggles Thomas managed to beat Murray after he had a flying start and jumping Doug to be three holes in front. Poor old Gary Bos drew the short straw and lost to Kevin Tait. It took the skipper a few holes to eventually beat Lou Villani 3up. So Yellows are now up and running for the season.

Yellows will have twelve players at Corowa for the state titles which is a

healthy turn out considering we have two players overseas, one on the injured list and some that just cannot make it.

Until next month with all the trophy winners, happy hooking

Hacker ♣



Armed Robbery in Oakleigh

At 5.55pm on Tuesday 14 December, 2010, two men entered Chemist Warehouse in Dandenong Road, Oakleigh, wearing hoodies with their faces covered. One of the men was armed with a tomahawk. The men entered the drug dispensary area and attempted unsuccessfully to open drug and cash safes, before allegedly stealing medication.

They then forced the pharmacist to the tills at the front of the store and demanded cash.

The men were both Caucasian. One wore a hooded jumper pulled tight over his face. The other wore a hooded jumper with a beanie on his head and his face covered.

Contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000 or visit www.crimestoppers.com.au. (Please quote reference no CA 5308) ♣



Child restraints and taxis

The VTA continues to field questions on what exactly are the rules that relate to carrying children up to the age of 16 years in taxis.

For a complete explanation of the rules governing child restraints please refer to the Road Safety Rules 2009.

These can be found on the VicRoads website at <http://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/Home/> under the heading Safety & Rules and the applicable rule is 266.

To simplify the rules these are the important points for all taxi drivers to remember:

1. Children (babies from 0-12months old) can be carried on the lap of an adult so long as they are in a rear seat.
2. Taxis are not required to carry child restraints; however they must be fitted with the appropriate anchorage points.
3. Children from 1 – 16 are not required to be restrained in approved child restraints; however they must be located in their own seat and be fitted with a seatbelt.
4. Children from 1 – 4 years must be seated in a rear seat.

5. Children from 4 – 7 years must not be in the front seat unless all other seats in the rear are occupied by passengers under 7.

As part of the Road Rules it is also worth noting that the driver of a taxi is responsible for ensuring any passenger under 16 years of age is either wearing a suitable seat belt or restrained in a suitable harness. If not the driver is liable to being fined regardless of who else is in the taxi. ❖



Photo: Fiona Hamilton

Taxi Operator Advisory Group

The Victorian Taxi Directorate (VTD) is committed to ongoing communication and engagement with taxi industry participants.

The VTD invites applications from a broad cross-section of operators to be part of the new Taxi Operator Advisory Group.

The new group will provide an opportunity for operators to provide feedback on taxi-related matters, policies and initiatives directly to the VTD.

A limited number of places are available.

Visit www.taxi.vic.gov.au or phone the VTD on 1800 638 802 (toll-free) to obtain an Expression of Interest form and further information about the selection criteria.

Applications must be received by the VTD by **Friday 15 April 2011**



Information boost for Victorian small businesses

Two hundred and eighty-two workshops and seminars will be offered over 2011 to provide businesses and prospective business owners with the facts and advice they need to make informed decisions and create a platform for ongoing success.

The Small Business Workshop and Seminar Program will be delivered by Small Business Victoria in partnership with host organisations.

The regional workshops and seminars will be evenly spread across Victoria, with Southern Grampians, Yarriambiack, Campaspe, Wangaratta and South Gippsland among the many locations.

The workshops and seminars have been grouped into five themes: Getting Started, Growing Your Business, Getting & Keeping the Right Staff, Achieving Financial Success, and Moving On.

All workshops and seminars are offered at a low cost to participants and delivered by private sector specialists who are well-qualified and experienced in small business.

For more information go to: www.business.vic.gov.au/workshops. ❖



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