

Australia's premier independent taxi industry magazine

TAXI TALK



December 2016 /
January 2017

ISSUE NO 582



ON THE RANKS SINCE 1966

PROUDLY PUBLISHED AND
PRINTED IN MELBOURNE

Print Post Approved number 100004912

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Victorian Taxi & Hire Car Industry

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FROM THE editor's desk

The current Victorian government Ministers are not taking responsibility for their own portfolios and are not enforcing the State's laws.

When the latest in the updates for the taxi and hire car industry were announced on August 23, didn't Minister Allan say that the prime difference between taxis and ride sourcing vehicles was going to be the fact that taxis were the only ones that would be permitted to do rank and hail work?

How was being in a holding area at Caulfield and Flemington during the racing carnival any different from being on a rank?

The Uber vehicles were not prebooked – they are hailed via the smartphone app. When the Uber drivers were “booked” at Flemington the driver accepted the booking and advised the passengers which “holding area” rank they were waiting at. The passenger then met their Uber driver accordingly and the driver took the passengers where they wanted to go.

Similarly at Melbourne Airport. There are Uber vehicles waiting in many places

in and around the airport. So when the passenger arrives he/she enquires where the Uber Rank is, and they are then told that there is no rank, but that they are in a waiting area – waiting to be booked. So all the prospective passenger has to do is use the smartphone app – hire an Uber vehicle to collect them and it's not too long a wait for their Uber ride to arrive because they are waiting onsite at Melbourne Airport.

I am confused as to how what Uber is being allowed to do is much different from taxis waiting on a rank for the next passenger waiting to be transported to their destination.

Now at this year's Vision Australia's Carols by Candlelight, Uber has been named as their Transport Partner. There will be an Uber Zone set up for drop offs and pick-ups on Christmas Eve. They are even offering a \$20 discount to first time users

So, my question is reiterated – how can Uber get away with this – promote this – partner with our Victorian companies, events, etc. – when they are not legal?

On August 23 the government advised

that no further taxi licences would be issued and that the compensation price for a taxi licence currently held was \$100,000. So how come the Taxi Services Commission allowed a taxi licence to be issued in September? There were also three licence transfers done in September at an average of \$150,000.

Joshua Morris, Chair of the Inquiry into ride sourcing services, recently commented, "If the government were to be selling licences that in effect are going to become redundant and be worth a significantly smaller proportion of the relative value of purchase, that would be a significant concern."

Aaron de Rozario replied, "It is certainly the case that nobody would be sold a licence without being very well informed of what is happening with the government's proposed agenda."

I do hope that the Taxi Services Commission has refunded the poor sucker who purchased their taxi licence for \$150,000 when it is now supposedly only worth \$100,000.

Northern Territory thought they could hold out forever and not allow Uber in - silly them. A new government, new man at the helm and now there is a 20 member steering committee looking at issues such as safety and the regulatory regime for the inclusion of ride sharing in NT.

The committee consists of representatives from NT Taxi Council, taxi networks, owners, drivers,

private hire cars, disability groups and Uber. Les Whittaker, Executive Officer of NT Taxi Council said that the taxi industry is "concerned, but we'll see how it goes".

Last month on a Wednesday morning, 13CABS had a booking system glitch that shut down the dispatch system at 3:00am until 6:10am. This caused absolute chaos for early commuters who were relying on 13CABS to get them to their destinations. And then there's the 13CABS taxi drivers who were forced to drive around and look for work as they didn't have any bookings.

Really! In this day and age, technology is certainly better than that, but it appears that 13CABS is living in the dark ages.

They have since apologised to any passengers who complained via Twitter and sent them a gift card. But no apologies to the drivers who were relying on that early morning work and wasted over three hours with no dispatch system.

Cabcharge (13CABS, CCN) has resigned their membership from South Australia Taxi Council, NSW Taxi Council and Victorian Taxi Association, effective 31 December 2016.

That is a majority of the membership base for all the associations. So, it will be very interesting to watch what approach and actions the associations take over the coming months.

It is said that Cabcharge investors want some fresh eyes at the helm. They want a Board who

will address the competition risk from the likes of Uber and attempt to increase Cabcharge's public perception thereby increasing the share value too. 2017 is shaping up to be a very interesting year.

Now, over to China. You might recall that Uber pulled out of China a few months ago and that left Didi Chuxing as the number one car hailing company in China. But the local governments have announced new rules that only local city residents will be allowed to drive for car hailing apps. This is not good for Didi Chuxing as most of its drivers won't qualify. In Shanghai alone, less than 3% of its 410,000 drivers are local city residents.

Whilst China's national government intends to allow ride sharing vehicles, administrators at local city levels can set different rules to protect vested interests. When Uber left China in July they got a 20% stake in Didi Chuxing. In turn the Chinese company also invested US\$1billion in Uber's global company.

2016 has certainly been a tough, tumultuous year - with many questions asked and with very few answers received. Let's hope that 2017 brings good news for everyone in the taxi and hire car industry.

Merry Christmas to you all. Take care on the roads during the Christmas/Summer holiday break. See you back in February 2017.

Toni Peters
Editor 

Compensation for licence holders

The Victorian Government intends to compensate Perpetual Licence Holders at the rate of \$100,000 for the first Licence and \$50,000 for the second Licence.



The question is compensation for what? Surely it is not compensation for declaring Perpetual Licences worthless in the future.

Therefore one has to come to the conclusion that the offer from the Government is an attempt to pacify those people in the Taxi Industry who did the right thing by serving the Public and abiding by all the rules and regulations required by the Government.

It was the Government's own regulations and laws that created most of the problems that led to some of the shortcomings in the Industry, and now the Government is on a path to destroy the most cost-effective and innovative Taxi Industry in the world.

If we look at the destruction that has already occurred we find that many multiple Taxi Operators have gone bankrupt or severely downscaled their operation. Many experienced and good Taxi Drivers have left the Industry and are lost to the Industry forever.

Most of the good regulations in the Taxi Industry have been abandoned by the Government and many of the bad ones are vigorously enforced.

Why does our Government enforce the law against its own hardworking citizens, allow the elite to make their own laws and regulation, and change existing laws to facilitate the elite?

Do our own citizens and workers not count anymore in our modern world where Politicians are more interested in how they can personally benefit from their positions in Government, than to make decisions in the interest of the general public, rather than a noisy minority?

It is surprising how little the people in positions of influence and decision making know, or want to know, about the intricacies of the Taxi Industry, and yet they make decisions that affect the lives of thousands of people.

To blindly trust in technology being used for the betterment of society is very dangerous and misplaced. This is especially true when wild statements are made by technology companies that are at best dubious and in some cases plainly not true.

In our modern world technology is very often used for the betterment of the very few in this world, especially if the same people who control the technology also control the media and advertising.

So how will our Government deal with the Perpetual Taxi Licence Holders in the future?

The Government intends to pay only compensation for the transition period. There is no mention of compensation for the Taxi Licences of Perpetual Licence Holders.

These people stand to lose the equivalent of an average suburban family home for no compensation whatsoever.



The Government seems to argue that they do not have to pay any compensation for any action they take with regards to those Perpetual Licences.

They feel that they can take assets in the form of Perpetual Licences from thousands of hardworking Australians and hand it to big business.

They totally disregard the fact that it was the Governments of both persuasions who created and promoted the value in Perpetual Taxi Licences over the last 50 years.

1. In 1973 the Government allowed the banks to encumber Taxi Licences and no licences were transferred by the Government till the encumbrance was lifted.
2. In 1986 the Government sold and financed the sale of Licences to qualified Taxi Drivers.
3. In the Kennett years more Perpetual Licences were sold in the form of M80s.
4. A further 50 Perpetual M50 Licences were then sold by the Labor Party and these were the last Perpetual Licences sold by Governments in Victoria.
5. In 2000 the Government started to sell the right to operate 600 Peak Service Licence for a yearly fee.
6. Further licences to operate a taxi were sold from 2014 till today for various time periods and money.

7. During all those years Taxi licences were promoted as a good investment, where one can run his own business in a Government regulated industry. The Government even went so far that it enabled the Bendigo Stock Exchange as a platform for the sale of Taxi Licences, and a minister of the crown promoted Taxi Licences as a good investment for Mums and Dads.

I feel that the Government can not walk away from adequately compensating the Perpetual Licence Holders.

The Government failed at best in their duty of care and at worst acted

in an unconscionable and dishonest manner by interfering with an ordinary market. It will not be easy to force the present Government into paying adequate and fair compensation for their actions.

However if all Perpetual Licence Holders show a united front and engage the right people to fight against this travesty, justice might prevail in the end.

I wish all the readers of *Taxi Talk* good health, Merry Xmas and all the best for the coming year.

Hans Altoff
Taxi Owner / Operator 



Economic Development,
Jobs, Transport
and Resources

Applications open for Fairness Fund

Taxi and hire car licence holders can now apply to the Victorian Government's Fairness Fund for financial assistance.

The Fairness Fund is needed because proposed reforms to the commercial passenger vehicle market, while benefitting customers, are also affecting people who own a taxi or hire car licence. The Government has allocated \$50 million to the Fund to provide targeted financial support to those licence holders who need it most.

Taxi and hire car licence holders who meet the eligibility criteria, and who demonstrate significant financial hardship as a result of the reforms, may qualify for payments from the Fund.

Applications for the fund are now open and will close on 30 April 2017.

The Chair of the Fairness Fund and the appointed auditing team will be conducting information sessions about the Fairness Fund and application process in the Melbourne CBD in late-January 2017. To register your interest in attending a session please email fairnessfund@ecodev.vic.gov.au

To apply or find out more information about the Fund see transport.vic.gov.au/fairness-fund

Z069001

Taxi **insurance** laws



Free and confidential legal advice to people living in Melbourne's western suburbs.

WEstjustice (Western Community Legal Centre Ltd) is an independent not-for-profit organisation that provides free and confidential legal advice to people living in Melbourne's western suburbs.

The Centre currently operates a Taxi Legal Service every fortnight (Monday) and has done so for the last five years.

This specialist legal clinic provides advice and case work in the areas of motor vehicle accidents, insurance/indemnity matters, licensing accreditation and debt /financial hardship. In particular, the Service has specialised in insurance/indemnity matters.

Recently, the Service has seen an increase in the number of clients presenting with the following two issues:

- No insurance for Third Party property damage; or
- Third Party Insurance policies which appear to be non compliant with Victorian taxi regulations in that the owner/operator is not listed as the insured but rather an "interested party".

The impact of not having third party property damage insurance or non compliant policies is to leave taxi owners, as policy holders, non compliant and in breach of their obligations as accredited taxi operators.

A secondary impact is that it leaves owners and drivers dependent on taxi clubs to indemnify them for motor vehicle accidents which is contrary to the intention of the regulations.

Laws surrounding Insurance for Taxis

The law surrounding third party property damage insurance was amended in October 2014.

Under Section 162L of the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983, all taxi owners are now responsible for ensuring their vehicles have the necessary insurance. This condition is now automatically implied into any agreement where a driver is driving an operator's taxi.

Therefore, an operator must maintain one or more policies of insurance providing third party cover of at least \$5,000,000 for each taxi driven by a driver in respect of property damage.

The conditions found under Section 162L of the Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983 go further under implied condition 3.2 to state that the policy must be:

- issued by a corporation authorised under the Insurance Act 1973 (Cth);

- be held in the operator's own name; and
- not be held in any name other than the operator's

We suggest that all owners/operators take a moment to look at their Third Party insurance policies, especially their Certificates of Currency to determine if the policy is listed in their name. It appears some policies list the owner as an interested party and not the policy holder.

For those who are seeking advice regarding a motor vehicle collision or an indemnity issue you can contact the WEstjustice Taxi Legal Service on (03) 9749 7720.

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WEstjustice can provide eligible licence holders with free legal advice and assistance with your application.

For more information about our service, or to make an appointment call

9749 7720

WEstjustice
Western Community Legal Centre

Forgotten promises

The taxi industry is in further freefall as our government is taking measures to kill any life still left in it by allowing the taxi playing field to be overlooked with “anything goes” laws.

Get the most current news and discussion on our FACEBOOK Page.



Since the August 23 2016 announcement, the state government’s proposals for the taxi industry have been a slow and merciless treatment of contempt. The government has a duty to uphold its laws and a moral obligation to compensate on each and every licence.

The participants within the taxi industry are treated unfairly to this day. They are enduring and facing financial catastrophe and psychological suffering. This is something unseen in modern times because licences were treated as assets, which were endorsed by government and therefore recognised by financial institutions.

The proposal not to compensate on **each and every licence** has not been accepted as fair or equitable and has sparked outrage,

anger and frustration at a government whose promises of “we will look after the taxi industry” prior to the election have somehow been forgotten or apparently “never said”.

The technological advances are changing the habits of consumers as is evident in our daily lives, and this should not be used as a reason by government to alter or manipulate existing laws to the disadvantage of an existing industry.

The government has an obligation to pay compensation on each and every licence if it wants to change the face of the point-to-point industry.

Victorian Taxi & Hire-car Families Assoc.



Membership application

PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS

Applicant Information

TITLE:	NAME:	SURNAME:
Date of birth:	SEX: M / F	Mobile:
Postal address:		
City:	State:	Post Code:
Phone:	E-mail:	

Membership type (please tick/complete all that apply)

Driver <input type="checkbox"/> (\$10 per year)	Operator <input type="checkbox"/> (\$20 per car per year) No. of Cars: _ _ _ _	Licence Holder <input type="checkbox"/> (\$100 per licence per year) No of Licences: _ _ _ _
Taxi <input type="checkbox"/>	Hire-Car <input type="checkbox"/>	

Joint Membership - Spouse Information

TITLE:	NAME:	SURNAME:
Date of birth:	Phone:	

Family Membership - Children (if membership privileges desired)

FULL NAME	FULL NAME
FULL NAME	FULL NAME

Signatures

I have read and agree to the Terms & Conditions of membership provided.

Signature of applicant:	Date:
Signature of spouse (only if for a joint membership):	Date:

Method of Payment: Cheque Cash

OFFICE USE ONLY:	MEMBER NUMBER:	PAID:
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Airport **access** charge

On 1 November 2016 Melbourne Airport increased the Airport Access fee for taxis from \$2.70 to \$3.58.

Taxis **ARE ALLOWED** to on-charge \$3.58.

The Essential Services Commission (ESC) has updated their fare determination and now allows taxi drivers to on-charge passengers for the airport rank fee, up to an amount equal to the Melbourne Airport access charge.

Therefore, taxi drivers will not be out-of-pocket as they can charge their Melbourne Airport passengers \$3.58 for pickup at the airport.

Taxi Talk recently asked Melbourne Airport why they were not charging Uber drivers for parking/waiting for passenger pickups. Melbourne Airport advised that "unfortunately we do not have a specific Uber holding area".

But the Uber vehicles are definitely there. They wait at McDonald's, they wait in the 10 minute waiting zones, they wait in the emergency lanes on the Freeway.

When the passenger arrives into town he/she enquires where the Uber Rank is, and they are then told that there is no rank, but that they are waiting close by – waiting to be booked.

All the prospective passenger has to do is use the smartphone app – hire an Uber vehicle to collect them. It's not too long a wait for their Uber ride to arrive because they are waiting onsite at Melbourne Airport and as soon as they get a booking for a passenger they drive on up to the terminals.

Can the personnel at Melbourne Airport actually be so blind and naive that they cannot see what Uber is doing?

At Melbourne Airport we have Taxis, Hire Cars and Ride Sourcing vehicles. These passenger transport vehicles should be treated in the same manner, insofar as they all wait/queue at the airport for their next fare and therefore they should all be paying an Airport Access Charge.

The Taxi Services Commission states, "with regard to fees set by Melbourne Airport, this is a commercial arrangement -- the TSC has no jurisdiction over how the airport structures its fees for access".

At this stage, of course, the prospective passenger will probably choose Uber over a Taxi as they don't have to pay the Airport Access Charge and Flagfall. Thus automatically saving them between \$7.78 - \$9.78 (depending on the time of day).

Uber is still illegal in Victoria but, to date, the Victorian Government and its representatives are not enforcing the law, not fining Uber drivers. Instead, because they are turning a blind eye to the antics of Uber, they are actually encouraging the public to both drive and be transported in an Uber vehicle. Where is the fairness in this?

How is this a level playing field for the Victorian taxi and hire car industry? **TT**





Drivers, Operators, Licence Holders and Networks of Victorian Taxi or Hire Cars

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Protect your **privacy** and keep **control**

Imagine that you operate a business which is part of a franchise network, such as a fast food business.

In most franchise systems, the franchisor organisation (which operates the entire group), controls the operations of individual franchisees and has online access to the revenue of all the franchisees within that group. Franchisors often monitor, in real time, every transaction done by franchisees.

Franchisors often charge franchisees service fees based on revenue, or turnover. The harder franchisees work, the more they pay. This is an important tool by which franchisors control their franchisees.

In your taxi business, if you use a taximeter owned by someone else, you may not own the confidential income data recorded by the taximeter and you may have no legal rights to the privacy of your income data. You run the risk that your revenue and transaction activity is monitored by others just as though you were a franchisee.

Like a franchisee, you run the risk that you will be charged service fees based upon your revenue, meaning that the harder you work, the more you pay.

When you install a G5 Taximeter you own the confidential income data recorded by the taximeter and have an absolute right to the privacy of that data. Unless you provide consent, your confidential income data cannot be used to charge you service fees based upon your revenue. Your privacy is protected and you keep control of your business.

The G5 Taximeter also helps you keep control of your business in others ways.

As the taxi business gets more competitive, the temptation for drivers to take off-meter fares increases dramatically. Anecdotal evidence indicates that off-meters fares are rife within the industry costing taxi operators a fortune in lost revenue.

Many taxi operators believe that 10% of revenue, or more, is now lost every year due to off-meter fares. That could mean lost revenue of about \$15,000 per annum per taxi, or lost operator profit of about \$7000 every year per taxi.

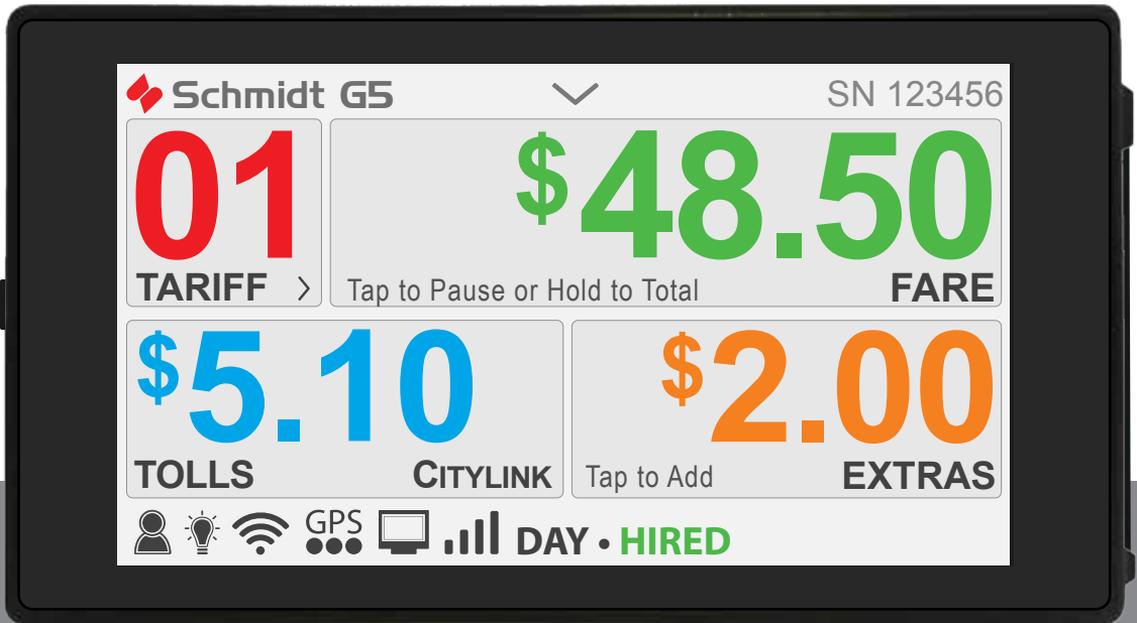
The G5 completely eliminates off-meter fares using ultrasonic technology. The optional Passenger Detection System starts a fare whenever a passenger occupies a seat in the taxi and the taxi begins to move. While a passenger is in the taxi, fares cannot be stopped until the taxi becomes stationary. This maximises operator revenue. The G5 Taximeter could pay for itself many times over every year and is arguably one of the best investments a taxi operator could currently make.

In these tough times, taxi operators need every tool available to them to keep their businesses profitable.

Fully automatic self-calibrating technology built into the G5 means that it recalibrates itself whenever required, such as when you change tyres.

The meter always runs accurately and there is no need to visit a dealer for calibration of the meter, saving operators and drivers both time and money. **IT**

To learn more about how the G5 Taximeter can help you run your business more profitably, download a brochure at www.schmidt.com.au/g5-taximeter



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- No need to visit a dealer for calibration, saving you time and money.

• Eliminates off-meter fares and could pay for itself many times over every year

- World's first taximeter with optional ultrasonic passenger detection
- Keeps the fare running whenever a passenger is riding in your taxi

• Prevent other parties from owning your confidential income data and putting your privacy at risk

• Control your taximeter via secure website log-in



We're **fighting** - are **you?**

Wednesday 23 November 2016 the Victorian Hire Car Association (VHCA) held its Annual General Meeting at the Skyways Hotel in Tullamarine. It was a well attended AGM and many thanks to those members who made time in their busy schedules to attend.

The Board was re-appointed unopposed and the Board thanks the members for their ongoing support.

A number of matters were voted on by our members relating to our Constitution, legal matters and future direction. A report of our AGM is available on our website (www.vhca.com.au).

The Board thanked those who have participated in the survey and signed the current VHCA petition. If you haven't signed the petition and completed the survey, it is not too late. Please visit our website for details.

While our membership numbers are good they can always be improved. We encourage and challenge all our members, between now and Christmas, to encourage others to join the VHCA.

If you haven't joined yet
... ask yourself,
why not?

Premier Andrews and Transport Minister Allan's announcement on 23 August 2016 has caused much grief and financial hardship to the industry. This announcement was made without legislation in place – at the time of writing, no legislation has been introduced into Parliament.

It is our considered opinion that this announcement should have been delayed until legislation was ready to be introduced.

In contradiction to the Premier's stated intention to create and maintain a level playing field, this announcement has created an extremely unlevel playing field as illegal ride share operators now believe they have free reign to do what they want with no consequences.

Unfortunately, the lack of genuine enforcement of the current laws by the Taxi Services Commission (TSC) only encourages them in the promotion of law breaking.





This has created a false impression in the mind of the public to such a degree that the Victorian Racing Club, Vision Australia and other organisations are actively seeking to partner with an illegal service.

We are led to believe that the VRC allegedly received over \$180,000 from an illegal ride share service to promote their business at the Spring Racing Carnival at Flemington racecourse. The TSC was advised by Mann Lawyers of this illegal activity and chose NOT to enforce the law.

The TSC's action, or more accurately the Commission's lack of action, has caused financial harm and personal hardship to hundreds of businesses and thousands of individuals.

It has also been reported to us that the TSC has been handing out "how to get driver certification"

pamphlets to illegal ride share operators rather than booking them for operating without a driver's certificate and driving a vehicle without accreditation.

Our impression and that of our customers, is that the TSC is effectively conducting a recruitment drive on behalf of illegal ride share services.

We call on Aaron De Rozario (the CEO of the TSC) to explain this bizarre and completely unprecedented behaviour to the hundreds of small businesses, thousands of employees who work in the hire car industry and the general public.

We know that the last few months have been a very difficult time for all involved in the Hire Car Industry – the Board hasn't given up and neither should you!

We will continue our on-going representations and discussions with Minister Allan, her staff, the TSC and all other relevant stakeholders as we pursue a fair outcome.

Wishing you all the best over the Festive Season – and remember – stay safe out there!

Rod Barton
President VHCA 



**On 27 October 2016
Mann Lawyers** (on behalf of the VHCA)
**sent a letter to Mr
Aaron De Rozario of
the TSC**

regarding Enforcement of Transport (Compliance And Miscellaneous) Act 1983 and Related Regulations- Flemington Racecourse: Prima Facie Breaches of Section 191Y

Excerpts of the letter are reproduced here.

I refer to recent reports in the media that Uber will be provided with operating facilities at Flemington Racecourse.... [during the Melbourne Cup Carnival].

Facilities being provided by the Victorian Racing Club at the venue include dedicated drop-off zones, concierge facilities and parking arrangements. Accordingly, it appears very likely that a large number of Uber drivers will seek to

operate at Flemington.

[and]

.....as you are aware, ridesharing remains illegal in the State of Victoria. Drivers are not subject to the careful regulation and oversight of the Taxi Services Commission, compulsory insurance or vehicle inspections. This creates a situation in which operators obeying the law face a commercial disadvantage, one which is exacerbated by a failure of enforcement.

continued next page ---->



We're **fighting** - are you?

continued from previous page

Given the potential vulnerability of race-going patrons, the need to ensure that only properly licensed operators are on the roads is of particular importance on occasions such as Cup Day.

In recent weeks, the Commission has summoned drivers, even of vehicles less than six months old, to inspections pursuant to Regulation 26 of the Transport (Buses, Taxi-Cabs and Other Commercial Passenger Vehicles) Regulations 2016. It has continued to demand evidence of drivers having prebooked fares only to combat the law on touting pursuant to Regulation 14, and vigorously enforces requirements that drivers of VHA/B/C-plated vehicles hold the appropriate accreditation. It would accordingly be a travesty should the Taxi Service Commission fail to take reasonable steps to prevent the flagrant disregard for the law to be allowed to occur in having potentially thousands of unlicensed operators at one of Victoria's premier sporting and tourist events.

The Commission is now on notice that very large numbers of intended offenders will be congregated in ranks at Flemington, and should take the appropriate steps to enforce the law, issue penalty notices as appropriate and maintain the confidence of the general public in the Commission's actions.

Accordingly, the VHCA expect that the Taxi Services Commission will have a suitable presence at Flemington Racecourse on 1 November and will be taking appropriate enforcement actions to ensure that Victoria's laws are enforced as they currently stand.... **TT**

NO RESPONSE from the Taxi Services Commission to 27 October letter - so here is an excerpt of the follow-up letter sent to them on 14 November 2016.

We are instructed by our client that no meaningful enforcement action was taken by the Taxi Services Commission at Flemington Racecourse against Uber or otherwise, despite you being specifically aware of the intention to and actual operation of large numbers of unlicensed operators, illegally operating unlicensed commercial passenger vehicles in a ride-share manner.

This is also despite the Taxi Services Commission's public utterances to the contrary, including those quoting you in The Age newspaper ("The Taxi Services Commission will continue its crackdown on Uber", The Age 31 October 2016.)

Over the same period, we are instructed that the TSC has conducted vehicle inspections of hire car licensees and a major operation at Melbourne Airport, involving lane closures and targeting licenced commercial vehicles. Our instructions are that neither of these activities resulted in any significant number of infringement notices.

Prima facie, the Taxi Services Commission appears to have made a policy determination not to take reasonable enforce-

ment mechanisms against Uber or other rideshare operators, but to continue to actively seek to enforce all regulations against licensed hire car drivers.

Obligation to Enforce

Pursuant to section 191YF of the Transport (Compliance And Miscellaneous) Act 1983, ("The Act") the Taxi Services Commission has a statutory duty to "develop, maintain and review taxi industry monitoring, compliance and enforcement policy." The policy must, inter alia, specify how options will be used by enforcement agencies to "monitor and promote compliance with, and the enforcement of, a commercial passenger vehicle law and specified road safety law consistently."

[and]

The Taxi Services Commission has indeed published a policy, dated 2015. Pursuant to the Act, it continues to apply for 2016 and is due for review in 2018.

The Policy includes a plethora of references to principles on which enforcement must occur. These include deterrence, proactive targeting, consideration of the necessity to maintain

public confidence in the administration of the law and regulate industry standards, to signal the seriousness which the TSC regards the non-compliance and a repeated obligation to consider the impact of the offences on other relevant persons.

Any reasonable reading of the Policy demonstrates that action having regard for the Policy would include targeting recidivist violators of the law and locations where large numbers of infringers are congregated in relatively small areas. Indeed, this is the basis on which targeting of vehicles at Melbourne Airport may be a suitable course of action. In this instance, hundreds of Uber vehicles were operating from designated ranks. Nothing in the policy suggests or allows for any exception on the basis of infringers being a ride-share operator.

Prima facie, the Taxi Services Commission is in breach of its statutory obligations to have regard to the Policy. Having been made aware of the intention of a large number of operators to in-

entionally and publicly flout the law, the TSC was required to have regard to its policy in determining whether to take action.

With the greatest of respect, it is incomprehensible that a public official could have genuinely had regard to the Policy as written and elected not to take enforcement action against Uber drivers at Flemington Racecourse. It is also incomprehensible that the TSC has uniformly failed to take material action against Uber drivers or against Uber itself, which continues to publicly offer an illegal service and to solicit drivers to enter into a contract to operate commercial passenger vehicles without a license.

Proceeding Further

[and] we request that you promptly provide us with full information as to the TSC's current efforts to enforce the law against unlicensed commercial passenger vehicle operators, in particular at public events.

We further request that you provide us with all details of the

process through which you, and any other officials involved in the decision-making process as to whether to send enforcement officers to Flemington Race Course during the Spring Racing Carnival, had regard to the Policy. The Victorian Hire Car Association, as an industry body representing the interests of non-taxi licensed commercial passenger vehicles, is a major entity that should reasonably be receiving full disclosure of the above information.

We note that the failures of enforcement have led to the normalization of the operation of unlicensed commercial passenger vehicle usage. This has caused our clients substantial loss or damage, which is ongoing. This may give rise to specific tortious causes of action.... **TT**

And as at the date of publishing, still
NO RESPONSE
from the Taxi Services
Commission!

FIGHTING FUND



If you wish to become a member of the VHCA and join them in fighting for your rights as a Victorian Hire Car Licence holder, please send the following via email to treasurer@vhca.com.au

1. Membership details
 - Your Name | Email Address | Mobile Phone number
 - # MH Licences | # Special Vehicle Licences
2. A remittance notice of your applicable payment advising your bank reference and value of payment made. (A receipt will be sent to you)
 - \$250 / MH Licence
 - \$100 / Special Vehicle Licence

Please pay your funds direct into our bank account

Account Name: VHCA #2 Account

BSB: 083337 | Account number: 408246370



Send your opinion letter to

email: yoursay@taxitalk.com.au

post: PO Box 2345 Mt Waverley VIC 3149

Please include your name & full contact details for verification.

The Victorian taxi industry has been outraged by the issuing of various new taxi licences, numerous hire car licences, by the imposing of 45/55 fares box split rate and compulsory insurance policies.

These backlashes are, however, the negotiable concessions amongst the industry.

In August 2016 the Andrews government announced the reform of the Victorian taxis, following the adoption of Uber activity, which has apparently been reducing taxis' activity.

This is virtually the abrupt confiscation of all taxis and hire car licences after many decades of continuous strict governmental administration, with inadequate compensation.

Is it legal? To this extent we need Law experts to deal with.

As a long service industry participant, I would like to contribute here a technical, economical and moral insight to the problem:

Who made Uber possible?

Taxi services have appeared in the history of every big city. Due to two-way radio, taxi depots have exerted the monopoly of operating mobile taxicabs, until the advent of mobile phones with which individual passengers can make an appointment for a private car to pick them up on the spot.

Mr Travis Kalanich noticed this effect and used a smartphone to operate his illegal commercial cabs (with no licences, no 2-way radio), hence reducing operating cost (no "no-job", no depot fee ...).

As a consequence, the cheaper fares allure many people to follow, including Mr Daniel Andrews!

Think about it and we can understand where the economical effect came from, apart from default licences that would have benefited the Government administration year after year!

The Government loses due to inability to control smartphones?

This should be the Government's problem, but taxicabs are made to be the scapegoats! At this point we should work together to find out who should be responsible, who should be able to resolve the problem?

Let's consider what taxi depots (network service providers) are doing.

- They continue to despatch jobs with inadequate details of passenger's name, phone

number, destination... . This results in frequent 'no-job'. I have suffered exactly 12 consecutive 'no-jobs in one shift (and received 12 "Thank you" from the radio-dispatch operator!... What pointless "Thank you"!!). This can be verified by looking at similar taxi drivers' shift records.

- Meanwhile taxi depots (network service providers) continue to charge indexed depot fees. And we continue to lose our customers to Uber and the like!!!

Dear colleague taxi business operators...

- You have organised demonstrations to retain your customers;
- You are organising a legal campaign to preserve your licences;

YET

- You ignore the weakest link in the chain of the taxi industry: taxi depots (network service providers).

continued next page ---->

I read that David Samuel of the VTA is leaving and says he's heartbroken.

Would it be a fair conclusion that he has been awarded a high position at Cabcharge in the near future?

With owners crucified, Cabcharge finances will be a massive winner for obvious reasons. To me loyal Dave's nose is starting to resemble Pinocchio's. They are going to love him at this year's Cabcharge Christmas party. Daddy in law, with Skelton and other crawlers. Anyway if you can't have conspiracy theories, what can you have?

Bye for now and Merry Christmas.

Dennis M 

David Samuel has moved on from the VTA and now holds the position of General Manager Victoria, 13CABS. 13CABS is a subsidiary of Cabcharge Australia. ~ Ed

During this bleak time they turn away to protect their own interest by leaving taxi businesses in the plight of scapegoat!

Beside our struggle to survive, if taxi depots (network service providers) also tried to improve the quality of their job dispatching system to reduce the frequency of 'no-job' (like what Uber did with their smartphones), then with more efficiency, more taxi ability, we could certainly excel. How could Uber compete?

I sincerely hope the 'generals' of the campaign will see through this concise opinion of incumbent 'soldiers' on battlefield, for our strategy in the future fight.

Let's think what people would do if this Government went on to confiscate other licences such as those of, say, from bottle shops, restaurants to post offices, chemists.

V Nguyen 

On the weekend of November 12/13 2016, Australia's unfair contract laws covering small business people began.

Last month a precedent setting judgement in London declared two of Uber's 40,000 British drivers to be employees and thus entitled to minimum wages.

The Uber ruling was on a case brought by a union to the Central London employment tribunal. The 40 page ruling declared that the drivers are workers within the meaning of the British Employment Rights Act.

The tribunal ignored considerations that Uber drivers provide their own tools, a vehicle and pay all expenses.

Drivers have total control of when or if they work by turning the Uber app on or off but the tribunal asserted that when the app was on Uber controls the drivers because it gives directions including driving routes through the Uber GPS map. Uber intends to appeal.

The Australian unfair contract law, however, is different. It is "revolutionary".

It is a likely global first in regulating the "fairness" of business-business contracts. The law largely codifies the common law structure of a commercial contract backing the power balance inherent in commercial contracts with more authoritative legislation.

The gig economy* is regulated under competition laws because its contract structures are so dependent on people being self employed.

However, if the gig economy does not have regulation that effectively protects self employed people, have no doubt it will be exploited by big business.

Australian unfair laws under Turnbull are a step in the right direction.

However, limousine companies who dispatch work to drivers must be careful because they are showing "control" more directly than taxi drivers who get work through dispatch as well as roaming the streets.

If you are not careful, you may become an employee liable for all those extras.

Luke Vincent 

* Gig economy - a term for the economy of those in temporary work.



New 13CABS taxi app attempts to take on Uber - but doesn't. The concept is excellent, sadly the execution not so great.

This afternoon a new Taxi booking app hit the App stores and promises a "rewarding move for both passengers and drivers" – always one to live in hope I rushed to download it and hailed my first cab just 30 minutes ago.

13CABS is a CabCharge company which books jobs for more than 6,000 Taxis across Victoria, South Australia and New South Wales.

In the last 12 to 24 months the pressure has been on existing taxi operators to compete with Uber and there's been one key difference – the Booking Apps. Existing taxi booking apps have been a poor attempt at customer interaction so the news of a new app was one I greeted with anticipation.

From a customer perspective, the new app does not allow drivers to "cherry pick" jobs as they can't see the destination until the passenger is in the car.

13CABS Chief Operating Officer, Stuart Overell said "This improvement is in direct response to feedback we've had from both passengers and drivers. With this update now in place passengers can be confident they'll be picked up as fast as possible this festive season."

"The new app will change the way passengers interact with our drivers, simplifying the entire booking process thanks to a more intuitive app experience. A time-saving improvement, passengers can now order a taxi with literally two taps of the app."

So – I put it to the test. I arrived at the radio station for my show tonight, and went out to the corner and dived

straight into the app to book.

I didn't enter a destination – because to the likely disgust of the driver, I just wanted to go round the block to test it out.

I requested the cab, and was greeted by an interesting screen. I had submitted my request, and what was this game? SNAKE! Awesome. I played, then unfortunately couldn't get out of the game. My only option seemed to be to cancel the booking. So I played more. Then waited. Finally a text came through confirming a cab booking. A little while later the App reflected the same thing.

Four minutes, he was around at Star City. But he didn't move. For seemingly ages, several minutes. Then the car on the map started doing strange things, rolling around in circles on the map, not following roads. This went on, for a long time.

Then, with the map reflecting him still way over near Star City, but clearly now en route – he appeared in front of me. The app never did catch up. Interestingly, the driver didn't have the app, he was just using the standard radio booking screen for cabbies.

We went for a little drive, enjoyed some ColdPlay and John Lennon – Ted's got a decent voice on him actually. When he pulled up, I told him I was paying in the app. He asked if I had cash or a card. Nope.

He pressed a lot of buttons, and with the CabCharge machine chose App and after a minute or

so of all this, confirmed it was paid. I walked back to work.

I'm not saying the app is a failure, but I wouldn't use it again.

Sorry 13CABS, but if this app was Uber, it was the first go and it would never have made it to the public.

I caught an Uber earlier today. Two taps to book, no long wait for the job to be accepted, and an accurate map of the drivers location and when the ride is over, I just hop out.

If I need to explain to the driver how the payment mechanism works, that's strange.

If I can't rely on the map I can't use the map as a guide to when I should be standing on the curb.

Snake is a great addition, very smart move. But the map needs a lot of work, and the drivers need to know that payment is simple.

In reality, the cab industry has much bigger problems than just a booking app – as evident by this line from their announcement today: "As part of the launch 13CABS has also partnered with Ambi Pur to eliminate odours and keep cars smelling fresh, an often overlooked but important finishing touch for passenger's comfort."

All that said, be clear, it's a leap forward for the industry, and it will get you a cab. I just think the process is smoother for the passenger using Uber.

Trevor Long 

Together we are stronger!

The changing and disruptive world we are living in is not only affecting the Taxi industry but most other industries around the world.

Our industry had enjoyed restrictive barriers to entry that provided some value to all stakeholders, some of whom definitely received more value than others.

The new world has destroyed all these barriers, and entry to our industry has never been easier. The knowledge test has been removed and age limits on vehicles has also been removed.

One would argue that these changes are beneficial, my view is totally different. The changes have been made to promote the new world that we are all living in. Making it easier to obtain a licence and removing the age limit of vehicles, will benefit an organisation such as TaxiLink, but it will not provide service to our customers.

We, as an industry, need to be focused on our customers and what they demand. Without these customers, who we call passengers, our business cannot exist.

One project that we at TaxiLink are currently working on is a new eBook that focuses on sharing taxi drivers' experiences.

By sharing our own real life experiences we provide others with the

opportunity to take advantage of our experiences, which can help build a better Taxi world. Ideally we are looking for drivers to share their best experiences on:

How they are delivering value and professional services to their passengers.

If we as an industry can lift our game and provide better value than Uber and others, I'm sure we will start to see passengers returning back to our service.

So let's start by sharing our great experiences. Please email me at harry@taxilink.com.au with what you are doing to provide service and I will share it in a book to everyone.

Harry Katsiabanis
TaxiLink 



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CREATING
TRANSPORTATION
NEEDS TODAY, FOR
TOMORROW



Taking on the impossible, VicHyper has designed and constructed a functional Hyperloop pod prototype to compete as finalists at the SpaceX Hyperloop Competition Weekend in California (27-29 January 2017).

Placing Australian ingenuity on the world stage alongside Stanford, MIT and Delft universities, VicHyper will be the first team in the world to operate a Linear Induction Motor within a vacuum.

Hyperloop is redefining high-speed ground transportation, with the ability to transport both people and cargo at the speed of sound (1200 km/h).

To reach these unprecedented speeds, a pod travels within an elevated tube network held at a near vacuum utilising magnetic levitation and Linear Induction Motors.

With an award-winning braking system, VicHyper has been selected from more than 1700 global entries to compete in the final 30 and accelerate the development of Hyperloop technologies.

VicHyper Project Leader, Zac McClelland said: "At VicHyper, we are anticipating the transportation needs of tomorrow rather than reacting to the problems of today. Hyperloop will be the solution to connect us like never before.

"Imagine living in Melbourne and working in Sydney with only a 50 minute commute, or travelling to regional Australia within minutes. We are making it a reality."

Breaking the barriers of distance, VicHyper is striving to develop Hyperloop technologies to implement in Australia, connecting both metropolitan and regional areas at the speed of sound.

RMIT Vice-Chancellor and President, Martin Bean CBE, said the VicHyper team is a wonderful example of the power of collaborating across disciplines. The team is made up of students with expertise spanning aerospace, electrical and mechanical engineering, industrial design, communications and graphic design.

"As well as working across disciplines, collaboration with industry has been at the heart of the VicHyper project, with our students being generously guided and mentored by industry leaders and practitioners," Martin said.

"By developing the very first Australian Hyperloop pod prototype, the VicHyper team is helping turn science fiction into science reality. We are incredibly proud of their efforts and I wish them every success." 



Singapore

Another taxi-booking app has bitten the dust in Singapore.

After two years in the market, the London-based Hailo stopped operations in Singapore on November 15, 2016. Hailo had faced stiff competition from apps such as Grab, Uber and the now-defunct Easy Taxi.

Hailo has recently completed a merger with another taxi app, My Taxi, and the new joint venture will focus on expanding its presence in Europe.

Besides offering cashless payments, the company also touted its app's "allocation algorithm". Through it, the Hailo app determines which driver is the nearest to the passenger and assigns him the job. In contrast, other apps used a bidding system in which the first driver to accept a passenger's booking request gets the job. In Singapore, there are three taxi apps left in the market - Grab, Uber and MoobiTaxi. **TT**

Brooklyn

ReachNow, BMW Group's car sharing service is growing rapidly in USA.

"When we first launched the ReachNow service in Seattle in April, 2016 we discussed plans for several mobility services that would make our more than 32,000 members' lives easier and more convenient.

Today we are delivering on those plans and continuing to build upon the successes of ReachNow by offering Ride, Share, Reserve, and Fleet Solutions within one ReachNow app, a first for the industry," said Steve Banfield, ReachNow CEO.

Details of the four mobility services are:

Ride: an on-demand ride service where you can order a driver as well as schedule individual and recurring rides in a ReachNow BMW vehicle.

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Fleet Solutions: offers residential members exclusive use of BMW i3 electric vehicles and BMW 3 Series that remain onsite at select apartment and condominium buildings.

Share: enables MINI owners to rent their vehicles via ReachNow when they don't need access to it, for a minimum of two days.

Reserve: for members who want to use the vehicles for longer trips of 2 to 5 days.

ReachNow members can locate and book the closest available car in the ReachNow app or find a ReachNow car on the street. Cars can be returned to any legal parking space on the street within the city's designated Home Area. **TT**

industry statistics

OCTOBER 2016

Taxi Licence zone	Licence type	# of licences 30/6/16	# of licences 31/10/16	Changes since 30/6/16
Metro	Conventional	4,217	4,130	-87
	WAT	443	444	1
	Total	4,660	4,574	-86
Urban	Conventional	420	417	-3
	WAT	85	80	-5
	Total	505	497	-8
Regional	Conventional	264	267	3
	WAT	72	72	0
	Total	336	339	3
Country	Conventional	127	127	0
	WAT	35	35	0
	Total	162	162	0
Totals	Conventional	5,028	4,941	-87
	WAT	635	631	-4
	Total	5,663	5,572	-91

Number of drivers

Active drivers 15,216
drivers who have recorded at least one shift last year

Accredited drivers (taxi, hire car & bus) 49,957

Compliance outcomes

Vehicle Inspections 1,323

Rectification Notices 146

Infringement Notices 3

Official written warning notices 3

Hire Car Licence	# of licences 30/6/16	# of licences 31/10/16	Changes since 30/6/16
Metropolitan	1,136	1,136	0
Country	63	64	1
Special Purpose Vehicles	966	975	9
Restricted	610	619	9
Totals	2,775	2,794	19

The figures on this page are updated and published on the Taxi Services Commission website each month.

London

Daniel Ishag this year launched the app Karhoo, which aimed to become Uber's biggest rival by allowing people to find and compare taxi fares.

However, the company shut up shop last month, less than six months after launch, after it ran out of money.

The total debts are reported to total £24m (AU\$40m) and approximately 200 Karhoo employees across London, New York, and Singapore have lost their jobs.

The company was giving individuals in London, New York, and Singapore hundreds of pounds worth of free rides as it looked to tempt them

away from platforms like Uber.

Meanwhile, Bloomberg reports that 42 year-old Daniel Ishag put expenses like designer shoes and clothing, hair salons and vet bills for his pet dog, on a corporate credit card. First-class flights, Cuban cigars, a "blow out" in Vegas, and a £12,000 (AU\$20,000) per month apartment in New York City were also expensed to the company, according to the report. **TT**

Malaysia

About 30,000 taxi drivers nationwide have ditched their cabs to join e-hailing services like Grab and Uber, according to a spokesman for the United Taxi Drivers Task Force, Rosman Rahmat.

Local taxi companies have started renting out private cars to taxi drivers who are eager to make the switch.

"They charge the former taxi drivers RM1,000 (\$AU300) rental weekly for the cars, whereas the rental for regular taxis is only RM350 (\$AU105) a week," Rosman Rahmat said. "Despite the RM650 (\$AU195) hike, more and more drivers are ditching taxis for Uber and Grab. They feel they can earn more from Uber and Grab customers."

"These companies know they need to survive. Those who give up driving taxis will be informed by the companies that there are private cars for rental. They will even be taken to Uber and Grab offices to be registered. It is all part of business continuity." **TT**

Ireland

A new service, Dash, will allow students to get taxis even when they have no cash, bank card or phone while ensuring the drivers get paid.

Dash (Driving All Students Home) was created by final year university Business Information Systems student Richie Commins and is currently available in Galway City, Ireland and will be launched nationwide in January 2017.

Richie came up with the idea after being left in situations many times without the physical means to get taxis. He designed a simple app for taxi drivers, so even if a student gets into a taxi with nothing, all they have to do is tell the driver their name and four digit pin for the driver to view the student on the app.

The driver verifies the student by their photo which has been uploaded to the website www.dashcabz.ie, sees their method of payment and takes them home at no extra cost. **TT**

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RULES & REGULATIONS **update**

Open your doors to Assistance Animals

As some of you might remember, the TSC did some work last year to help drivers better understand the role of assistance animals, and why it is important to allow them in the taxi.

We held an event at the airport where drivers could meet a guide dog and all operators were mailed a guide to help their drivers identify different assistance animals.

Assistance animal refusals still remain an issue, so we've created some media which encourages all drivers to open their doors to assistance animals. This video highlights the important role drivers play in connecting people with assistance animals to the community. 



Fairness Fund

now open

Applications for the Fairness Fund are now open. The \$50 million fund will provide targeted financial support to licence owners experiencing significant financial hardship.

After close consultation with the industry and those affected, the number of licences the Government will provide financial assistance for, will be increased from two to four.

The change means perpetual metropolitan licence holders will receive \$100,000 for their first licence and \$50,000 per licence for up to three more.

This transitional financial assistance will be included in the first stage of legislation, which will be introduced early next year and will be paid out over two years, rather than eight – in line with the reform period. **TT**

To apply for support through the Fairness Fund, visit taxi.vic.gov.au or call 1800 875 122.

Information sessions will be held in late January 2017 and applications close on 30 April 2017.

\$2 trip levy in 2018

The \$2 per trip levy that funds transitional financial assistance will be introduced as part of the first round of legislation and be directly tied to the passage of the Bill that regulates ridesharing.

The levy will be introduced in 2018 and will replace annual licence fees – currently up to \$23,000 – considerably reducing the cost of operating a taxi. **TT**



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Do Dads Experience

—*Postpartum Depression?*—



With up to one in 10 Australian women experiencing depression during pregnancy, around one in seven in the year following birth, and even more experiencing anxiety, these conditions affect tens of thousands of expectant and new mothers each year. Many new and expectant fathers also experience these conditions.

Last month beyondblue launched its new *Just Speak Up* website at www.justspeakup.com.au.

You can share your story or read the experience of others who have experienced what you are going through. The site can help you realise you are not alone and can recover.

beyondblue CEO Kate Carnell AO said help is easily accessible for women who may be struggling with depression and with the pressures of adapting to parenthood.

Information is also available for the recovery of dads. Taking the first steps to get better is often the hardest part.

"That is why, if you think that you or someone you care about might be struggling with depression or anxiety during or after pregnancy, you should visit the website," she said.

"But I would also urge all new parents to visit it and learn about the signs and symptoms of these conditions so that they can recognise them. The site is full of easy-to-access information and advice to guide people through what

can be a terribly stressful and confusing time."

"Feeling anxious or depressed during or after pregnancy is not a usual part of having a baby but, by visiting this site, people can find out how to start getting better," Ms Carnell continued.

PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety and Depression Australia) CEO Belinda Horton said it is vital that new parents still make time for things they enjoy outside family life.

"Taking time away from the baby as an individual and with your partner is an important way to look after your mental health," she said.

"There is no other job where you would expect to be on call 24/7 without a break. Also, these conditions have many faces, so we all need to know what they can look like."

"Postnatal depression is not a women's issue, it affects both parents, children and whole families and without treatment it can change their lives forever. Early intervention and the right support leads to a faster recovery."

beyondblue ambassador and media personality Em Rusciano experienced postnatal depression after the birth of her second child when, rather than the elation she felt after her first pregnancy, she had trouble bonding with her baby.

"This was made worse by the insomnia I was experiencing, and I felt like I was in a fog and couldn't be the mother I wanted to be," she said.

"I was too scared to get help because I thought people would think I was a terrible person. I finally went to a doctor who immediately diagnosed me with postnatal depression, which was a huge relief and the start of the road to recovery. That road has been tough and there have been ups and downs. But you just have to keep trying

because feeling better is worth the effort."

PANDA ambassador and blogger Kylie Brown, who is married to former Brisbane Lions footballer Jonathan Brown, said her experience had taught her these conditions are nothing to be ashamed of.

"Jonathan and mum are probably the two people I hid it from the most because they were so supportive and encouraging," she said.

"But I now know that these conditions can affect anyone during pregnancy or as a new parent. It breaks my heart to think people are struggling. Knowing you're not alone is such a good thing and talking to strangers before you can confront your loved ones can help as well." **T**



PANDA National Helpline
1300 726 306
or
www.justspeakup.com.au



For information about depression or anxiety in men during or after pregnancy, visit the PANDA website www.howisdadgoing.org.au

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Roads update

Making them
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North Victoria

Major maintenance works are underway across north and north eastern Victoria to make regional roads safer and more reliable for drivers.

More than \$40 million in improvements has begun to rehabilitate sections of road to make them smoother and resistant to further damage.

A number of sites will receive major repairs and maintenance works including the Hume Highway, Goulburn Valley Highway, Mclvor Highway, Kiewa Valley Highway, Midland Highway and key rural roads including Benambra-Corryong Road, Benalla-Yarrawonga Road and Bacchus Marsh-Gisborne Road.

Over 250 kilometres of road will also be resealed across the regions including sections of the Murray Valley Highway, Melba Highway, Borung Highway, Pyrenees Highway and Great Alpine.

Reducing the level of deterioration of road surfaces will provide a boost to local regional producers, making their journey to market or to the factory more reliable.

The road improvements will not only create smoother and safer roads for all motorists but will also preserve the longevity of the roads.

While many communities across the region have struggled with recent flooding and severe weather, these works will provide extra support to complete emergency and patching works that have and are continuing to take place. 

New Tulla/Bell Bridge

Major works on the new 275 metre bridge at Bell Street are underway.

Drivers can expect to see road changes as works progress on the new bridge connecting Bell Street to Pascoe Vale Road.

The new bridge will free up the existing bridge for freeway bound traffic, helping to reduce congestion and keep freeway traffic moving. It will also boost safety at the Bell Street intersection by removing a dangerous blind side merge for drivers travelling from Bell Street to turn left onto Pascoe Vale Road.

To minimise disruption for motorists, the bridge will be built over a series of overnight closures while the beams are joined together to ensure the road operates during the day. 

Uber and government working together

The ACT government has struck a deal with Uber which will see Night Rider bus users get \$10 trip discounts for their 'last leg home' from the city this festival season.

Transport and City Services Minister Meegan Fitzharris said the Australia-first partnership with the ride share service would make getting in and out of the city more cost effective.

The agreement, which works in conjunction with the Government's special late-night bus service, cuts \$10 off each Uber journey taken after Canberrans hop off a Nightrider bus in December.

Uber will absorb \$5 of the discount with no charge to their drivers and the Government will foot the other half of the bill.

The discounted fare is only available between 11pm and 2:30am on Friday and Saturday nights to get commuters from major Nightrider drop-off hubs to their doorsteps.

The Government said the taxi industry was consulted and given the same opportunity to innovate, but it was Uber that came to the table with the plan.

Uber NSW and ACT general manager Henry Greenacre he was "super excited" about the partnership.

"We know it's difficult to seamlessly connect travellers from the public transport network to their doorstep and we're pleased to be working with the ACT government to help crack this last mile challenge," Mr Greenacre said. 

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Drinking. Driving.

They're better apart.

Road safety teams will visit every corner of the state to help ensure country Victorians get home safely during the festive season.



Between now and the end of January, TAC teams will attend more than 40 country racing days, music festivals and other community events to urge people to think about the speed they're travelling, and to take extra care of the roads.

Vanessa, the TAC's youth program, will have vehicles at summer music festivals and youth events, running games, as well as providing free breath tests, giving away prizes and helping young people plan a safe way home.

The TAC will visit numerous Carols by Candlelight events, and partner

with Cinema Pop-Up, which will be travelling the state shortly. Free breath testing will be on offer at all Country Racing Victoria events.

Minister for Roads and Road Safety Luke Donnellan said "We're urging everyone to slow down, plan your trip, and take your time – often the best gift you can give at Christmas is just being there."

"As we head into the busy holiday season, we'll be doing everything we can to ensure Victorians arrive safely, with more speed enforcement, more random breath tests, and more police officers blitzing

the roads," he continued.

The state is approaching its third straight year of increased road fatalities, with Victorians four times more likely to be killed and 40 per cent more likely to be seriously injured on regional Victorian roads.

"There's a lot on our social calendars over the next few months so we just need people to plan their trips, separate drinking from driving, avoid driving while tired or distracted and look out for each other on the roads," said Transport Accident Commission CEO Joe Calafiore. **TT**

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Melbourne

Major events



Until 18 December



Santa's Christmas Spectacular at Wonderland Spiegelent Docklands

This is where Santa's Magical Workshop comes to life this Christmas. It's one BIG GIANT PARTY and a special fun-filled adventure for the whole family! Enjoy Wonderland's rides for all ages, Dodgem Cars, Grand Carousel, Swing Ride and Tea Cups. Shows are at 11.30am, 1.30pm and 3.30pm.

21 Dec - 30 Jan



HEALESVILLE SANCTUARY

Creek Play is the coolest way to have fun at the Sanctuary all summer long and kids under 16 years old get free entry every day! Spot true-blue kangaroos hopping around their home, catch Platypus keeping cool and see the koala family settled in the new Koala Forest treetops boardwalk.

All through January



Discover playful and imaginative adventures at Arts Centre Melbourne

Experience the magic of imaginative, funny and playful international and local theatre, take part in their free family events, or delight in a disco-dance-walk around the arts precinct. Everyone's welcome!

from 8 December



Royal Botanic Gardens Alexander Avenue

Summer is set to sizzle as the biggest blockbusters heat up the silver screen at Moonlight Cinema with nearly 20 advanced screenings and 19 new releases. Gates are open 1½ hours before the film starts, so grab your mates, snap up your grassy patch and lay back for a summer of fun, food and films under the stars!

Until 8 March 2017



SUMMER NIGHT MARKET

Fill those summer nights with Melbourne's largest and best array of global street food, curated bars, artisan and vintage stall holders and quirky activations. Every Wednesday during Summer you'll be rocking out to three live music stages and floating around the historic Market sheds with the cream of Melbourne's busking scene and roving entertainers.

16 - 29 January 2017



Two weeks of non-stop tennis action. Djokovic, Federer, Williams and Kerber, the stars of the sport, will make Melbourne Park their own as the on-court action and off-court entertainment of Grand Slam tennis take over the city. Whether you're a die-hard tennis fan or just looking for a fun day out, you're sure to find something to please at the Australian Open.



vision australia's carols by candlelight

Vision Australia's Carols by Candlelight® has been a fabulous Christmas tradition for 78 years, bringing Australia classic Christmas carols and an evening of entertainment with something for the whole family and 2016 will be no exception!



In addition to being a wonderful show, all of the funds raised by Vision Australia's Carols by Candlelight go directly to provide services to children who are blind or have low vision and their families.

In 2015, thanks to the support of the community, they raised \$1.3 million! Whether you purchase tickets to see the event live, watch it on TV or make a donation during the show - you are helping to support a very worthwhile and real cause.

Vision Australia's Children's Services provides support and resources to increase independence and enables a child to participate meaningfully in every aspect of their life.

Their services include orthoptists, early childhood educators, speech pathologists, orientation and

mobility specialists and counsellors who work with families to provide support and knowledge to address their child's particular needs.

In addition to Christmas cheer, patrons are encouraged to bring rugs, cushions, low backrests, picnics, sunhats and sun screen. Collapsible prams are permitted. Sealed or empty plastic water bottles up to 650mls can be brought in and free tap water is available. There is no access to tap water in King's Domain so please bring ample to drink whilst you are queuing to get in.

The show has never been cancelled in 78 years and it will proceed even if it rains, so please watch the weather forecast and be prepared with a raincoat. **TT**

Inverloch JAZZ Festival

10-13 March 2017

*It's an outstanding festival
full of great Jazz for a great
cause in a great place.*



The Inverloch Jazz Festival is co-ordinated and organised by volunteers and 2017 is their 24th Festival. Held in Inverloch a small seaside town in South Gippsland Victoria Australia, the town becomes alive as Jazz kicks off with 40 outstanding bands and musicians.

Last year's festival raised funds for The Inverloch Men's Shed. Over the 23 years the festival has helped to raise well over \$300,000 and has been a platform for many other organisations like The Lions, Rotary, and The Inverloch Surf Life Saving Club.

Whether it's tapping your feet, being inspired by an arrangement, hearing a new song, or just meeting up with old friends and musicians, come and celebrate this wonderful collection of talented musicians as they set up to entertain you.

And as one patron said "its the only festival I know of where you can listen to jazz, go for a swim and come back for more jazz". **TT**

TICKET PRICES

full details and bookings at www.inverlochjazzfestival.com

FULL FESTIVAL WEEKEND	at the door	\$90
	pre book	\$80
FRIDAY NIGHT ONLY (7.30pm – 10.30pm)		\$30
SATURDAY or SUNDAY - FULL day pass 11am - 11pm		\$50
	- DAY session to 11am-6pm	\$35
	- NIGHT session 7pm-11pm	\$35
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WATER

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AVOID

Alcohol, tea, coffee and hot, spicy and salty foods. These can make dehydration worse.

REST

Make sure you get enough sleep and rest when you feel tired.

ENJOY

Try eating more cold foods, like salads and fruits.

SHADE

Wear a hat or take an umbrella with you for shade when you are outside on a hot day.

SOAK

Take a cool shower or bath to help you cool down when you feel hot.

DRESS DOWN

Wear lightweight, light coloured loose-fitting clothing made from natural fibres.



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TWO FACES



RIDDLES

1 A group of campers have been on vacation so long, that they've forgotten the day of the week. The following conversation ensues.

- Darryl: What's the day? I don't think it is Thursday, Friday or Saturday.
- Tracy: Well that doesn't narrow it down much. Yesterday was Sunday.
- Melissa: Yesterday wasn't Sunday, tomorrow is Sunday.
- Ben: The day after tomorrow is Saturday.
- Adrienne: The day before yesterday was Thursday.
- Susie: Tomorrow is Saturday.
- David: I know that the day after tomorrow is not Friday.

If only one person's statement is true, what day of the week is it?

2 Until I am measured I am not known, Yet how you miss me when I have flown. What am I?

3 What is so delicate that saying it's own name breaks it?

4 I am the beginning of the end, and the end of time and space. I am essential to creation, and I surround every place. What am I?

RIDDLES - 1. It is Wednesday. If it was any other day of the week, more than one statement would be true. 2. Time 3. Silence 4. The letter e.
End, time, space, Every place

SUDOKU

The aim of this game is to fill in empty squares using digits from 1 to 9. Each digit must be found once and only once per line, per column and per region.

			8	5	7		1	
	5			2		3	8	
				6				2
		6						
	4	2	6	7	5	8	9	
						7		
5				8				
	2	9		1			7	
	3		2	4	9			

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Cruise shipping at Station Pier

Cruise ship season is here again. All taxi drivers are encouraged to support and service this growing tourism market. Taxis can access Station Pier for passenger drop off and collection from the managed taxi rank once security has undertaken a quick identification check.

Arrival Date	Cruise Ship	Arrival (approx)	Departure (approx)
2016			
Saturday 3 Dec	Pacific Jewel	3 Dec 0700	3 Dec 1600
Sunday 4 Dec	Golden Princess	4 Dec 0600	4 Dec 1600
Friday 9 Dec	Pacific Jewel	9 Dec 0800	9 Dec 1600
Monday 12 Dec	Pacific Jewel	12 Dec 0700	12 Dec 1600
Tuesday 13 Dec	Sun Princess	13 Dec 0800	13 Dec 2200
Wednesday 14 Dec	Emerald Princess	14 Dec 0700	14 Dec 1700
Friday 16 Dec	Pacific Jewel	16 Dec 0700	16 Dec 1600
Saturday 17 Dec	Golden Princess	17 Dec 0600	17 Dec 1600
Monday 19 Dec	Maasdam	19 Dec 0800	19 Dec 1700
Wednesday 21 Dec	Celebrity Solstice	21 Dec 0900	21 Dec 1700
Sunday 25 Dec	The World	25 Dec 1300	25 Dec 2100
Thursday 29 Dec	Pacific Jewel	29 Dec 1200	29 Dec 2100
Friday 30 Dec	Golden Princess	30 Dec 0600	30 Dec 1600

Arrival Date	Cruise Ship	Arrival (approx)	Departure (approx)
2017			
Thursday 3 Jan	Europa 2	3 Jan 0800	3 Jan 1700
Wednesday 4 Jan	Crystal Symphony	4 Jan 0800	6 Jan 1800
Saturday 7 Jan	Emerald Princess	7 Jan 1000	8 Jan 1700
Monday 9 Jan	Pacific Jewel	9 Jan 0900	9 Jan 1800
Thursday 12 Jan	Golden Princess	12 Jan 0600	12 Jan 1600
Friday 13 Jan	Pacific Jewel	13 Jan 0700	13 Jan 1600
Saturday 14 Jan	Celebrity Solstice	14 Jan 0800	14 Jan 1700
Saturday 14 Jan	Seven Seas Voyage	14 Jan 0800	15 Jan 1600
Tuesday 17 Jan	Maasdam	17 Jan 0800	17 Jan 1700
Tuesday 17 Jan	Golden Princess	17 Jan 1200	17 Jan 2300
Wednesday 18 Jan	Golden Princess	18 Jan 0600	18 Jan 1600
Saturday 21 Jan	Pacific Pearl	21 Jan 0800	21 Jan 2000
Tuesday 24 Jan	Europa	24 Jan 0800	24 Jan 2359
Wednesday 25 Jan	Pacific Jewel	25 Jan 1200	25 Jan 2100
Thursday 26 Jan	Radiance of the Seas	26 Jan 0800	26 Jan 1700
Saturday 28 Jan	Pacific Jewel	28 Jan 0700	28 Jan 1600
Saturday 28 Jan	Europa	28 Jan 0800	28 Jan 1800
Tuesday 31 Jan	Golden Princess	31 Jan 0600	31 Jan 1600

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