TAXI TALK
VOICE OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

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ON THE RANKS SINCE 1966

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CONTENTS

10
LICENCE COMPENSATION
How should perpetual licence holders be compensated?

18
FAIRNESS FUND FRUSTRATION
Many need assistance with fund applications.

20
INDUSTRY LEGISLATION
Government has tabled the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017 in parliament.

32
NEW HEALTH APP
A mobile app will drive better mental health for cabbies.

34
AIRPORT SHUTTLE TRIAL
A fully autonomous electric vehicle at the Christchurch Airport.

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KIDS UNDER COVER

FROM THE editor's desk

Last month we saw members and affiliated personnel of the Victorian Taxi and Hire Car Families, blockade major access routes to and from the CBD and Melbourne Airport - twice even.

Many of the public don't truly understand the situation within the Victorian taxi industry. I have heard people say:-

"If I invest in shares and they go south, I don't get compensation. They invested, they lost."

"If the taxi industry was so great, they wouldn't lose a customer to Uber."

"I'd support them if only they supported me in getting home from the city late nights and not asking if I was going east or west before locking the doors and driving off."

"Taxi companies have had plenty of notice that ride sharing services were coming to Australia - enough time to circumvent complacency and adapt to competition. This is a result of their complacency."

And then I have also heard comments like:-

"I don't condone this behaviour but you can understand their frustration. They were made to pay a fortune for taxi licences and they're now worthless. They get a small compensation payout from the government through Andrews Uber tax, yet it will net him $billions."

"If your home was compulsorily acquired, for the greater good, you would expect to be paid, right?"

"You have to remember - they paid a lot of money for those licences, if those licences are suddenly devalued, don't you think they are entitled to a refund?"

"Everyone is bagging the taxi owners....they aren't all bad and inefficient. There are a lot of good ones that have put in so much money for this job and now the government has made their licences null and void. Give them back what they are owed and let them on their way."

So, did the blockades achieve anything? Not sure about that one. If nothing else it has got the public talking about the taxi and hire car industry and perhaps some of them have learnt a thing or two. But one thing is for sure - in these tumultuous and uncertain times the taxi and hire car industry needs to be on their best behaviour.

Neat uniform, clean cars - inside and out, fresh body odour and service with a smile. And remember to accept every fare asked of you!

You certainly don't need anything more for the public to complain about.

Stay positive - the future is not set in stone, things can change and most probably will.

With the handing down of the judgement from the Federal Court last month, whereby it was found that Uber is a taxi for the purpose of collecting and paying GST, perhaps public perception has changed regarding Uber.

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Perhaps some people have come realise that Uber is still an ILLEGAL entity in Victoria. That Uber has been taking money away from taxis and hire car drivers and operators ILLEGALLY and that it has been fighting against the ATO with regards to due taxes.

Uber drivers are providing a service by transporting passengers from point A to point B. In Australia if you provide a service, you collect and pay GST. Pretty simple really.

Overseas in Brazil a judge has ruled that a driver using the Uber ride-sourcing app is an employee of Uber. Therefore the driver is entitled to workers' benefits - eg overtime, night shifts, holidays and expenses such as petrol, water and candy for passengers.

This, together with the tax levies being imposed by many countries on Uber, may substantially increase costs and Uber may have to rethink its position and structure within the ride-sourcing industry.

With regards to the Fairness Fund we have learnt that:-

- It is most likely that Fairness Fund payments will attract tax.
- All applications and payments will be processed by mid 2017.
- Applications are based on individuals. If licences are owned by companies, trusts or like, the application needs to detail how this business structure impacts on the financial position of the individual.
- There will be no formal appeals process after the assessment has been completed.
- Emotional and health conditions will be considered in the assessment and how they impact on an applicant's financial position or as extenuating circumstances must be detailed.

In South Australia Life Without Barriers is working with and supporting UberASSIST. Whilst it is a good thing that the Uber drivers receive as much training possible to assist passengers with mobility needs, I must query as to why Life Without Barriers would chose to support and be aligned with an ILLEGAL entity?

Yes it is only a matter of time before UberX and UberASSIST will be legal in all states and territories in Australia, but at this stage they are not legal in South Australia nor Victoria.

Toni Peters
Editor

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UBER DRIVERS PAY GST

It's official! Ride-sourcing drivers are taxi drivers for GST purposes.

Just as taxis and hire cars must pay GST on every dollar they earn, so too the drivers of Uber vehicles must pay GST.

Last month Justice John Griffiths of the Federal Court handed down the ruling that, for the purposes of GST, Uber drivers (therefore all ride-sharing, ride-hailing and ride-sourcing drivers) are to be treated as taxi drivers and subject to GST regardless of the total yearly monetary reward gained by driving the vehicle. Thus ending the 18 month battle by Uber against the Australian Taxation Office.

During the case Uber argued its drivers were not taxi drivers because they could not use taxi ranks or pick up passengers on the roadside. But the Tax Office quoted a number of dictionary definitions to argue the term taxi should include ride-sourcing services.

Justice Griffiths said, "I accept the Commissioner's submission that the ordinary meaning of the word "taxi" is a vehicle available for hire by the public and which transports a passenger at his or her direction for the payment of a fare that will often, but not always, be calculated by reference to a taximeter".

He said the fact Uber cars did not have taxi meters installed in them was irrelevant because it was not essential to the ordinary meaning of the word "taxi".

Sandy Spanos, Victorian Taxi and Hire-car Families (VTHF) President said, "This has been a long time coming. It's exactly what we've been saying all along."

"Nobody is exempt from paying GST. If you are ferrying passengers from Point A to Point B for commercial reward - you are a taxi," she continued.

In August 2015, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) ruled Uber drivers must register for the GST even if they earn less than the small business threshold of $75,000 per year.

This means drivers must pay 10% GST on the total fare value on top of the commission (approx 20-25% of the total fare value) that goes directly to Uber.

The ruling leaves Uber drivers unable to claim GST credit from the ATO for the 20-25 per cent commission they pay to Uber. This is because payments go direct from passengers to the company's Dutch operation, where commission is deducted.

In 2015 Uber responded to the ATO ruling by increasing its passenger prices by 10% and it is now

"We have testimony that you walk like a duck and you quack like a duck. Tell the court - are you a duck?"

mandatory that all ride-sharing, ride-hailing and ride-sourcing drivers MUST pay 10% GST to the Tax Office.

The VHCA is pleased with the Federal Court's decision that from a tax point of view Uber is a taxi service.

VHCA President Rod Barton said, "This decision goes some way to levelling the playing field yet it also raises other questions for:-

1. Work Cover - do they consider Uber a taxi service? If so will they be seeking Work Cover premiums from Uber?
2. TAC - do they consider Uber a taxi service? Will that impact on TAC premiums for Uber drivers' vehicles?"

"It is a sad irony that while the Andrews Government has talked about its proposed deregulation of the commercial passenger vehicle industry, as creating a "level playing field", both in terms of processes and outcome, it has been the Federal Court that has taken the first step which creates any semblance of the basics of a level playing", continued Rod Barton.

ATIA (Australian Taxi Industry Association) chief executive Blair Davies said. "We applaud the decision. It means that UberX drivers have to be registered for GST just like taxi drivers, so they can't go under the radar. "

Mr Davies said, "the ATIA simply want a level playing field. The Tax Office has decided to do that. We just wish some of the state governments would take the same view and not have regulatory hand-ups for UberX and regulations and red tape to stop taxi services being as efficient as they possibly can."

Drivers who have not already remitted the GST component of their fares (since August 2015) to the ATO will be found out, instructed to pay and fined accordingly.

Justice Griffiths has also ordered Uber to pay the Commissioner's costs of the litigation.

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UBER = TAXI

Following the Federal Court ruling last month many questions have been raised. Here are some of them and their relevant answers.

Questions	Answers
Are ride-sourcing, ride-hailing or ride-sharing services taxable?	*Yes. A driver providing taxi travel via a ride-sourcing or similar enterprise is making a taxable supply under GST legislation.*
Do taxi, hire car and ride-sourcing drivers have to issue a tax invoice?	*If the fare is more than $82.50, the driver must issue a tax invoice if requested. A receipt can be delivered directly to the passenger's mobile phone and if it has the necessary information the driver does not need to issue a separate tax invoice.*
There are conflicting views about ride-sourcing, ride-hailing, ride-sharing drivers being taxi drivers. Who is correct?	*Drivers providing ride-sourcing services are providing taxi travel under GST law that was upheld by the Federal Court of Australia in February 2017. This view is only about how Australian Government tax laws apply and whether a particular activity is taxi travel for GST purposes. The various states and territories have different laws about what a taxi is for their own regulatory purposes and the ATO view of the tax law does not affect the interpretation of what is a taxi for state regulation purposes or for other Australian Government law purposes.*
Does this advice apply to other forms of transport?	*In summary, rickshaws and motorised tricycles are not cars which the ATO considers a vehicle must be, in order to be a taxi. Similarly the ATO considers that wedding and funeral cars are not considered to be used in providing taxi travel because they are not available for public hire for general transportation from point A to B but rather for special occasions. In some instances, these businesses will have turnover of at least $75,000 and so they are required to be registered for GST.*
How does GST apply to ride-sourcing, ride-hailing, ride-sharing fares?	*The fare that is calculated by the facilitator is the full fare including GST. The GST you pay to us, less any GST on your inputs such as fuel, is one-eleventh of the total amount charged to the passenger.*
For those drivers who have not been paying GST since 1 August 2015, will they now need to back-pay this GST?	*Yes. All drivers involved in providing ride-sourcing services MUST be registered for GST and meet their GST obligations like any other taxpayer.*
Is GST payable on a toll charge passed on to a passenger?	*Yes, GST is payable on the toll passed on to the passenger, but the driver is entitled to claim a GST credit for the GST component of the toll charged.*
What is the GST treatment of bonus and top-up payments?	*GST is a tax on consumption in Australia only. If you receive a bonus or top-up payment from an overseas facilitator the service you are providing is not consumed in Australia and is GST-free.*
What are the GST consequences of delivering goods through a ride-sourcing arrangement?	*If a customer orders delivered goods from an overseas facilitator, and a facilitator engages you as the driver to deliver the goods and pays you, your delivery service is consumed by a customer in Australia and is subject to GST, even though the facilitator is based overseas.*
What is the GST treatment of cancellation or no show fees?	*Under ride-sourcing arrangements, the customer may be obliged to pay a fee when they do not show for a trip arranged through the app (a no show). Any cancellation fee that is charged to the customer is subject to GST.*

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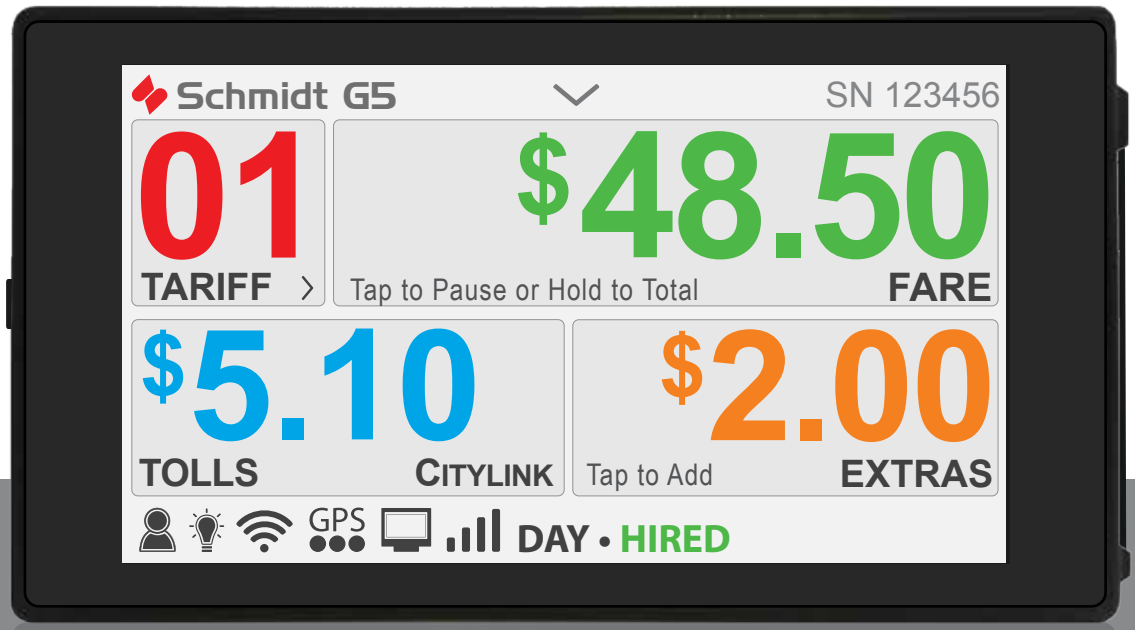

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LICENCE COMPENSATION?

How should Perpetual Licence Holders be compensated?

Very soon the Taxi Industry will be once again in the limelight as Parliament starts to discuss their new laws and compensation issues in the Passenger Transportation Industry.

It will be at this time that the perpetual licence holders start to fight back against the injustices inflicted upon them by a government that cares more about big business than about their own citizens.

It seems to be clear that the government is not backing away from their plan to replace perpetual taxi licences by some form of permits, that hold no monetary value. It is also evident that the government has paid very little attention to the plight of passengers with respect to affordability, availability and their safety.

So, let us look at these issues in a more detailed manner.

The government wrongly assumes that the taxi industry needs a new licensing system, but refuses to buy existing perpetual licences back at an appropriate price.

The government proposes to put a $2 per trip levy on the travelling public to pay for buying back existing taxi licences and hire car licences. The logistics of collecting this levy would be very expensive and create another bureaucracy that would eat up most of the money collected.

However, it should not be the travelling public or the taxpayer who bears the cost of the proposed new licensing system.

If the government feels that the current system, which has existed for more than 50 years, needs to be replaced, then they should make everybody who wants to profit from transporting people pay a yearly fee.

This annual licensing fee would be payable to the government on a yearly or monthly basis. These funds could then be used to properly and adequately pay for the existing licences.

The $2 per trip would theoretically bring the government more than $75 million per year in revenue.

A yearly fee of $12,000 for a full time licence and $6,000 for a part time licence would raise the same or even higher revenue.

Under this scenario the government could set their own rules and issue as many licences as the market could bear. The taxpayer and the consumer would both be happy.

Also, the government and the adequately compensated licence holder would be happy.

So why not do it?

Oh I forgot, **big business** is not happy - **big business** does not want to pay.

They want to steal the assets, which took decades to acquire, from thousands of small businesses. They do not want to obey our laws, and they do not want to pay our taxes.

So, why is our present government and the opposition so hell bent on changing our laws in order to accommodate **big business**?

If we look in more detail at what the consumer faces in the future, we find that the outlook is not as rosy as the government and **big business** want us to believe.

By abolishing the rules and accommodating Uber with respect to the age limit on cars, the government condemned the consumer to an inferior service.

The easily visible and recognisable Yellow Taxi will also become a relic of the past.

The proposal to let the industry set its own fares will inevitably lead to higher fares and exploitation of the consumer which is already evident by the surge pricing of Uber. The availability of taxis at hotspots will decline and the service will increase in price.

The safety of passengers will become a concern as more and more private vehicles are used to carry passengers for reward.

The community at large will carry the burden of higher insurance costs when private vehicles carry people for reward.

So what should the government do to protect its citizens and the Australian taxpayer from exploitation by **big business**?

1. The government should use the independent Essential Services Commission to set maximum fares for transporting people for reward.
2. The government should not change existing laws to reward **big business** for breaking our existing laws.
3. The government should buy existing taxi and hire car licences back at a fair price .

The government should make the newcomers to the commercial passenger vehicle industry, pay for the privilege of replacing an industry that abided by all government regulations and laws, for more than 50 years.

There will be many unforeseen consequences that will have a big impact on Australian families, when and if the government introduces its proposed changes. We can only hope that our politicians will be better informed and vote in the interest of all Australians when they vote in 2017.

Hans Althoff

Taxi Owner / Operator

REFORM IS ASSET THEFT

Victorian taxi and hire car industry is on a path to destruction and total oblivion.

This is being driven by the state government that is continuing to show no moral or ethical values in its governance for its people.

VTHF
Victorian Taxi & Hire Car Families

The rally which occurred on Monday 13 February was intended to bring to attention the cruel and inhumane treatment that has been imposed on the people of the taxi and hire car industry.

This rally was successful, as it showed unity amongst all and sent a clear message to the government that as an essential service, the taxi and hire car industry will put a stop on the city and further demonstrate the neglect of the state government and its damaged reputation.

The transport minister tried in vain to stop the rally and proclaimed it as "reckless and irresponsible", however the countless attempts for discussion to relay concerns that the reforms will leave people financially crippled and destitute, being ignored by government, constitute behaviour beyond "reckless and irresponsible".

Recently the Federal court ruled that Uber are nothing less than a taxi service. As such, Uber must comply with tax obligations because they do provide a point to point service.

This ruling may in fact place the Taxi Services Commission under pressure to ensure the public safety is paramount and to fine Uber for continuing its illegal operations as a taxi service.

This should be a given as the lack of security features in the illegal service has led to an opportunistic criminal act against a passenger in Sydney and subsequent charges leading to a term of imprisonment for the driver.

Our fight against these so called reforms will never cease and the message of our plight will always be shouted out loud and clear.

These cruel reforms are nothing more than asset theft and decimation of an industry where no one will ever get behind the wheel of a cab.

Victorian Taxi & Hire-car Families Assoc.

photo: Jason South

WE INVESTED IN THIS INDUSTRY

The solution is simple... BUY BACK all our licences - BUY FAIR.

Linda De Melis delivered the following as a speech on the steps of Parliament House Saturday February 11 2017.

For too long our plight has been misrepresented, and for too long we have been ignored. The misinformation stops today!

Let me make it perfectly clear who we are, and why we are here. We are licence owners of the taxi and hire car industry. We are here to demand a fair buy back of each and every taxi and hire car licence. We are not here to oppose industry change.

The government can dismantle the industry if they choose, but we should not have to pay the price of industry reform.

The current proposal by the Andrews Labor government will see all existing taxi and hire car licences cancelled – simply scrapped for zero capital compensation.

In no other state of Australia is this being done.

Instead, the government will provide a TAXABLE income transition payment of $100,000 for the first licence, and $50,000 for a second, third and fourth licence, but nothing for anything above four – and this will be paid over two years. That is two years of income compensation for an asset acquisition.

We have remaining loans and living expenses that are dependent on the equity and ongoing income that a licence provides. How do we continue paying these expenses if our asset and our income vanishes?

Make no mistake - a licence is an asset. We hold them in PERPETUITY...that means FOREVER!

Taxi licences are described as assets in the Commonwealth 'assets test';

- The Tax Office allowed licences to be included in superannuation funds;
- Banks have been lending up to 80% of their value and hold them as collateral;
- The Victorian Labor government itself established a trading facility for licences on the Bendigo Stock Exchange;

And a licence can be leased allowing people to derive an income. Despite what the government would have you believe, licences are not tokens cut from a box of cereal - they are assets.

..../continued page 16

VTHF
Victorian Taxi & Hire Car Families

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

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The Victorian Taxi & Hire Car Families

WE INVESTED IN THIS INDUSTRY

..../continued from page 14

We are not dealing with the collapse of a stock on the share market – we are dealing with a compulsory government asset acquisition for zero capital in return.

It is fair to expect a capital buy back of ALL our licences, just like any other asset.

I have spoken to Labor ministers who have defended their position by saying a proper buyback would be too expensive. If this is the direction of industry reform that the government wishes to take, then they should have carefully considered the cost of doing it right .

The very definition of an act of THEFT is forcibly taking something you want but do not own either because you cannot afford or do not wish to buy it.

Yes, there is no doubt that a licence buyback would be expensive, but confiscation of our licences for nil capital value amounts to government theft. This is NOT OK.

We did not invest in a $2 stock, or run our money through the pokies. We put our money in an investment created BY government, sanctioned BY government and participation was encouraged BY government.

There are many examples of government 'buyback schemes':

- scallop and fishing licences;
- water entitlements in the Murray-Goulburn;
- guns and
- sunbeds.

Yes, you heard it right - sunbeds were bought back by the government when the commercial solarium industry was outlawed in 2014.

In 1999, a buyback of taxi licences was conducted in the Northern Territory when the industry was deregulated there.

Why is Victoria any different? What makes OUR assets less worthy?

What makes people in OUR industry less deserving?

At peak, a metropolitan taxi licence was trading upwards of $500,000. Many people still have loans to match. They will lose their homes.

Revoking licences without a fair and equitable buyback is robbery of the highest order. The current industry transition package is grossly inadequate, amounting to approximately $400 million.

The government proposes to raise this money through the introduction of a $2 levy on every passenger trip for AT LEAST 8 years. Industry statistics tell us the levy will raise in excess of $1 BILLION. Where is the rest of the money going?

Over $600 million dollars will disappear. Will it be put towards the budget black hole created by the East-West link? The government should not profit while leaving licence holders destitute. The impact of these reforms becomes a social justice issue.

Good, law abiding people stripped of their assets will be left in debt, with no income, no superannuation and no future.

Mr. Premier, this is not a game. This is about people's lives; this is about doing what is right.

There are at least three generations standing before me from all across Victoria. I stand here for my 80 year old parents. My young children have watched and learned. This has been an education for them.

We will never forget the destructive and cruel treatment of the people in this industry, the hardworking mums and dads, and the small business owners.

Premier Andrews, we may be set to lose our assets but in this process we will also lose something that is valuable to you – something that you cannot buy. We will lose faith in the Labor government – the 'working man's party'. Worse still, we will lose faith in our current political system.

Mr. Premier, your announcement back in August last year outlining the industry reform package states: "...the government will continue to consult closely with industry participants".

We are six months on and we have all been wondering when this consultation will begin. Our concerns have been dismissed.

Mr. Premier, your lack of understanding has brought us here today; and it is your sheer arrogance that will drive us to the Bolte Bridge on Monday. This is not what we ever wanted but people are losing their homes and their livelihoods. Desperate times call for desperate measures.

This can all be reversed. We all want a swift resolution so we can have our lives back. The uncertainty and stress have taken their toll. We want due consideration of ALL taxi and hire car licences.

THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE
BUY BACK BUY FAIR!

Linda De Melis

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FAIRNESS FUND FRUSTRATION

Many of our members seek assistance with fund applications.

Six months has passed since the Victorian Labor Government announced their proposed changes to the taxi and hire car industry, yet the lack of direction and clarity from Government representatives and industry regulators continues to cause widespread distress and anguish amongst our members.

Although designed to provide targeted assistance for licence holders who are facing significant financial hardship as a result of the reforms, the Fairness Fund, at least at the time of writing, is proving to be anything but.

From the time it was announced, we have had correspondence from our Members seeking assistance with accessing the fund.

There were delays in opening the applications. There was miscommunication from TSC representatives regarding the process and even when information sessions were held earlier this month, the limited number of places made available meant that some, who are being significantly impacted financially, psychologically and emotionally, were unable to attend.

The feedback from those who have been through the process of applying is extremely concerning and further highlights the lack of respect being afforded our Members by the Government and its representatives.

Impact of a proposal before it takes effect

The main question asks claimants to *"briefly describe the circumstances of your financial hardship, explain how you consider this to be a direct result of the announced Victorian taxi and hire car industry reforms".*

In other words, how are you being impacted NOW by a proposal that has not even been agreed on let alone implemented?

It concerns us greatly that this large sum of money is being "offered" to assist those struggling since a "decision" was made – as opposed to anything concrete.

Has this "decision" effectively meant that the current climate is a true snapshot of the hardships that licensed operators will experience?

By extension does that mean that unlicensed operators are currently free to operate in the same manner that they will be allowed to after (if) new legislation is written, introduced and passed?

We would suggest that the offer to assist individuals now is an admission that the current laws are not

being enforced – otherwise, these funds should be made available to capture the true hardship which will only be felt AFTER changes to the industry have materialised.

Fund Administration Cost

While the Government is talking up the sum of $50 million being set aside to assist impacted licence owners, the question of whether the cost of administering the fund will be paid from the allocated $50 million or in addition to it remains unanswered. Given that half of the previous $4 million hardship fund of two years ago was paid to administrators, we would be hoping that this is not repeated.

Fund Replenishment

Given that applications are being processed as they come in and not at the end of a submission deadline, the question has justifiably been asked if this a race for cash or will each claim be assessed on its merits? How does an individual with a valid claim access this fund if the $50 million is already exhausted?

Process for Appeal

Another major area of concern is the decision to deny unsuccessful applicants the right to appeal. Without access to information sessions or any set criteria to base applications on, we are concerned that most in need of assistance will be left without adequate support.

These are but a few of the queries and frustrations that have been conveyed to the VHCA in recent months.

We have written to the Chairmen of the Fund as well as Government Ministers seeking answers but at the time of writing, no response had been received.

Many have begun to lose hope and have refused to submit applications rather than endure what has been described as a "cruel and humiliating process."

To those Members and all others, we urge you to stay strong and take the opportunity to apply.

We would like everyone to be adequately compensated for the mishandling of this serious issue and welcome any further feedback in relation to your experiences.

Victorian Hire Car Association

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2. A remittance notice of your applicable payment advising your bank reference and value of payment made. (A receipt will be sent to you)

Please pay direct into our bank account

Account Name: *VHCA #2 Account*

BSB: *083337*

Account no: *408246370*

INDUSTRY LEGISLATION BILL

Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017

On 22 February 2017, Hon Jacinta Allan, Minister for Transport presented the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017 to parliament.

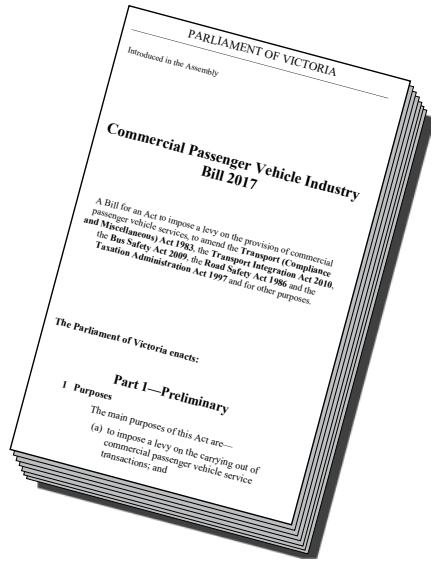
The Explanatory Memorandum introduction of the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017 states its purpose is 'to establish a new and modern regulatory regime for commercial passenger vehicles that focuses on safety and the provision of consumer protections'.

It defines the services of a Commercial Passenger Vehicle as being -

- booked in a wide variety of ways (through a booking service); or
- procured at taxi ranks or hailed from the street (an unbooked commercial passenger vehicle service).

The intention is also to consolidate categories of Commercial Passenger Vehicle licences by -

- converting all existing types of taxi licences (for example, those that only apply for a fixed term and those that only permit operation at peak times) to "new taxi-cab licences"; and
- converting special purpose vehicle licences and restricted hire licences to hire car licences.



PARLIAMENT OF VICTORIA

Introduced in the Assembly

Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017

A Bill for an Act to impose a levy on the provision of commercial passenger vehicle services, to amend the **Transport (Compliance and Miscellaneous) Act 1983**, the **Transport Integration Act 2010**, the **Bus Safety Act 2009**, the **Road Safety Act 1986** and the **Taxation Administration Act 1997** and for other purposes.

The Parliament of Victoria enacts:

Part 1—Preliminary

1 Purposes

The main purposes of this Act are—

(a) to impose a levy on the carrying out of commercial passenger vehicle service transactions; and

Those who provide a booking service for the use of a Commercial Passenger Vehicle, which includes bookings using apps and webpages, must be accredited, regulated and made accountable for the service they provide.

Hire car zones and operating restrictions will be abolished.

Taxi zones will remain in the interim to support the operation of -

- maximum fare regulation for taxi services in the Melbourne Metropolitan Zone and the Urban and Large Regional Zone; and
- the price notification and publication scheme in the Regional Zone and the Country Zone.

To support the compensation package that the government is offering Taxi and Hire Car Licence owners, a $2 per trip levy has been included in the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017.

The Bill states that the purpose of the levy is to recover the cost of the government's transitional assistance package, as well as helping to support the ongoing provision of accessible point to point transport services.

The Bill makes providers of booked and unbooked Commercial Passenger Vehicles liable to pay a levy of $2 for each trip.

The State Revenue Office, the body which is responsible for administering the levy, must receive a quarterly report from all operators on how many trips they have done in the quarter and payment of an equivalent of $2 per trip levy.

It is not stating that you must charge every single passenger/fare the $2 levy – it is simply stating that you, the operator, must pay the State Revenue Office $2 for every trip you do.

Ms Allan said "What we are wanting to achieve through this legislation is there will be more providers, greater competition, more choice for passengers and we are also stripping out administration costs and red tape costs".

"The annual cost of $23,000 will be removed, therefore the cost of entry fees will be reduced and with more competition there is an expectation that fares will go down," she continued.

The Bill will be debated when parliament resumes early March and if it passes through the Legislative Assembly it will then go to Legislative Council for consideration.

If the new regulatory framework (which includes the $2 Trip Levy) is accepted by the Upper House, the effects of the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Bill 2017 will commence before 30 June 2018.

Until such time ride-sourcing, ride-hailing, ride-sharing entities and drivers in Victoria are still operating ILLEGALLY.

DON'T TEXT AND DRIVE

Texting and driving isn't a millennial problem. It's an engineering problem.

If you know anything about millennials, it's that they love their smartphones. They love them so much, in fact, that they refuse to drive without them.

According to American Automobile Association (AAA), two-thirds of drivers ages 19 to 24 have read a text message or email while behind the wheel in the last thirty days.

That's bad. But before you get all wound up about the wayward youth, look at the rest of the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety's latest annual Traffic Safety Culture Index. According to the self-reported survey of 2,511 licensed drivers 16 and older, the problem's all over the age spectrum.

More than 40% of respondents admit they've used their phones while driving; nearly a third say they've taken the time to send a text or email behind the wheel. Oh, and 81% responded that kind of behaviour poses a "very serious threat" to their personal safety.

No amount of fist shaking or age shaming will fix the problem of injuries sustained while texting and driving-caused crashes. Banishing distracted driving demands an engineering solution.

"Don't get me wrong: Driver education and the understanding of the risks involved are critical," says Charlie Klauer, who studies driver distraction and fatigue at the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. "But the solutions here are probably technology, and designing uses so that drivers can keep their eyes on the forward roadway while they engage in some of these things."

For researchers, product designers, and policy makers, the challenge is to figure out how to allow people to use tech (which they're going to do no matter what) without killing themselves. "If they must, if they simply must, it's better to do it in a way to keep their eyes on the road," says Klauer.

Fixes are in the works, and have been for a few years.

Many phones now come with a "driving" mode that blocks things like incoming calls.

You can buy anti-distraction apps.

Hands-free and voice-activated texting, navigation, and calling reduce the likelihood of a crash, but they're not perfect—any technology that forces drivers' eyes to slide from the road, even for just a moment, increase risk of an incident.

The real problem here is that scientists are still working out the vagaries of multitasking—that whole mind/body connection thing.

Turns out, driving distracted is complex. Scientists know brains can handle a finite cognitive load, which is why dividing one's attention between, say, watching Twitter and writing this article, or driving and Snapchatting, means doing both sub-optimally.

But what's an acceptable level of distraction? And can anyone eliminate the problem altogether?

Klauer's research suggests distraction levels on the road do indeed fluctuate with age and task.

A recent study finds those between 16 and 20 are likelier than other age groups to get in trouble while fiddling with the radio, but that drivers between 21 and 29 are the likeliest to be involved in crashes when they're reaching for an object inside the vehicle, or while playing with an in-vehicle device like a built-in navigation system.

Texting can increase the risk of a severe crash by as much as 2,300% for teen, young adult, and senior drivers, but middle age drivers seem to somehow be better at it. Of course, the standing question is "why?"

While human factor engineers like Klauer, work on what's happening inside the car, they could also use some help from engineers of a different stripe: traffic engineers.

Research shows that certain kinds of road design—like making streets narrow, or lining them with trees—can make drivers uneasy, and perhaps less likely to indulge in a risky text.

Aarian Marshall

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CMU NAVLAB

This company is relatively unknown to most people, even though CMU Navlab has been around for quite some time. The company builds computer-controlled vehicles for automated and assisted driving. Some of their earlier models even date back to 1984, making them one of the few players who have been working on this technology for decades. Their latest vehicle is called the Navlab 11, a robot Jeep Wrangler packed with more sensors than most other vehicles on the road today.

BAIDU

Baidu is a popular Asian search engine and is also very active in designing a self-driving car. Baidu is talking to city authorities in China and plans to have their autonomous cars running in 10 Chinese cities within three years.

Baidu's Senior Vice President, Wang Jing, says he's on a mission, "to push China to the forefront of the coming driverless-car era."

"There are all sorts of possibilities lying ahead for Baidu," said Wang. "People may see Baidu-brand autonomous cars running on the streets one day, or they may find Baidu becoming a supplier of Baidu Auto-Brain to assemblers."

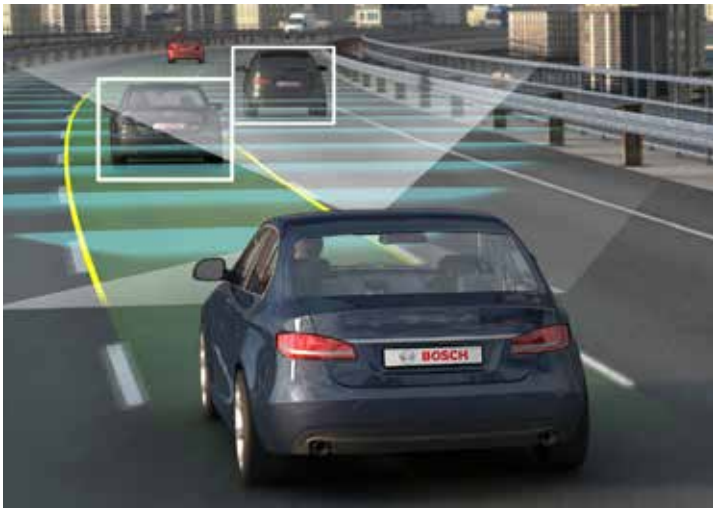
"One thing is for sure," continued Wang, "my grandchildren definitely won't be requiring driving licences."

THE SELF DRIVING CAR

You have probably heard about the autonomous vehicles that Tesla, Google and even Renault are working on, but did you know there are many companies working towards being the forerunner in the new generation of vehicles?

Here are a few companies you may not have known are researching, designing, creating, building and testing autonomous vehicles for the future. And the future is not too far away.

The latest word in the technological autonomous vehicle world is that we will probably have real, fully automated, autonomous vehicles (not ones that are assisted by a 'sometimes' driver) on the road within the next three years - 2020.



BOSCH

Bosch and NVIDIA (computer graphics card manufacturers) are collaborating to develop AI self-driving computers for production cars, based on NVIDIA's AI DRIVE PX 2 platform and software that integrates Bosch radar and other sensors.

Building on advanced AI technologies from NVIDIA, Bosch is adding 130 years of experience in automotive, together with an expanded deal with Audi - they are going to be a force to be reckoned with in the coming years. TT

CONTINENTAL

The Continental autonomous vehicle is capable of navigating through rush-hour traffic without any significant issues. It has four short-range radar sensors and one long-range sensor. It also has a stereo camera that will allow the vehicle to cruise down an open freeway.

People lose a lot of time just sitting in the traffic, waiting for all those people going to/from work to get to their destinations. If those people were to be travelling in an autonomous vehicle, the driver would be able to do some productive work and not have to concentrate on driving. Thus this will display the strengths of autonomous vehicles for the future. TT

Darcy Allen reported in the HeraldSun 15 February that there is abundant economic evidence that suggests taxi licences have raised the prices we pay for our journeys.

If Darcy Allen had bothered to peruse the Essential Services Commission reviews of the Victorian taxi industry, he would have found that this is not the case.

The fundamental reason that taxi fares have risen over the years is due to the increase in the cost of living, cost of fuel and other running expenses of maintaining a taxi. This has also included the government mandatory requirement to install duress alarms, protection screens, constant upgrades to taximeters, safety cameras, taxi decals, domes and lights.

Darcy Allen wrote, "..... it's a worry that it takes five years for an innovative, beneficial, popular service to even establish the legal right to exist". But Darcy, even today Uber is not legal and should not be operating in Victoria. Uber has not yet established the legal right to exist.

The taxis are losing jobs because an illegal entity is operating in opposition. Uber charges are not always cheaper than taxi charges. What about when Uber invokes their surge pricing at peak times? Is this fare then really cheaper than a taxi fare?

He goes onto to say, "We should be extremely wary of the precedent that taxi licence compensation might set."

Precedent has already been set with compensation/buy-back paid for the east-west link, tanning salons, guns, just to name a few. Yes, the government is going to have to pay when they change policy as they don't appear to have the foresight to envisage what the future has in store for us.

D Tay

How Fair is the Fairness Fund?

To possibly comply and receive funds it appears you must be nearly destitute and living on the streets of Melbourne.

Wouldn't it have been much simpler for the Victorian government to just tell Uber etc, that if they wanted to operate here in Victoria they must comply and there would be a cost per vehicle?

All the extra money received over time could have gone back to Hire Car and Taxi operators through a co-ordinated buy-back arrangement by the government. This surely would have alleviated all the stress on current legal operators and made it a truly fair and level playing field.

BUT – NO it seems that the government must waste $400 million on a poor scheme that undervalues taxis and hire car operators, ruining tens of thousands citizens and families, for the comfort of allowing (free of charge) an international company, who flagrantly and deliberately ignores our State regulations and legislation.

R Shaw

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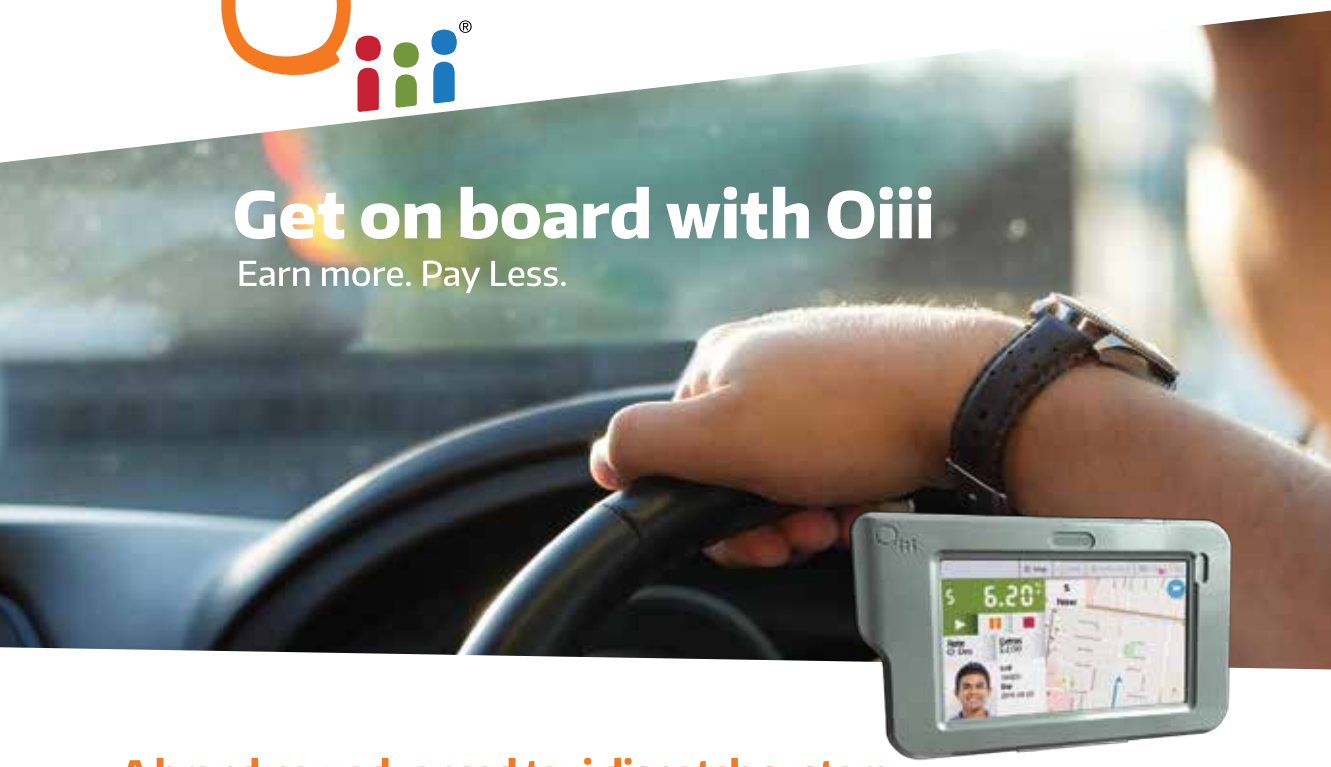

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Global NEWS

France

A businessman is suing Uber after it tipped off his wife about his affair.

The app-based company is facing a lawsuit after the man's wife was alerted to his location while he was cheating on her with another woman.

The man, from southern France, had requested a car using his wife's phone, according to local reports.

But when he gave the phone back to her, the app continued to send notifications to her phone about his whereabouts - even though he had logged out of the account.

The couple has since divorced and the businessman has reportedly filed a lawsuit against Uber worth €45 million (AU$61.7million).

The bug is a known flaw which has affected other customers, with some confused users taking to Twitter to ask why they were still getting friends' notifications even though they had logged out of their accounts. TT

Dubai

Speaking at the fifth annual World Government Summit in Dubai last month, Tesla Chief Executive, Elon Musk, said that autonomous vehicles could arrive sooner than many of us expect and thus be much more disruptive than anticipated.

Musk predicted roads will be populated with self-driving vehicles in less than five years – an estimate that is in line with comments made by a US expert earlier this year.

Travis Kalanick, Uber CEO, said that Uber will continue to evolve in line with the transport market. "We will partner with the car industry," he said with view to the passenger vehicle segment.

"We want cars to be available everywhere every time efficient, quick, reliable, affordable, and fully democratized. Push a button and go where you want to go."

His three-year vision is equally ambitious: "Uber is at the beginning of becoming a robotics company," Kalanick explained. "Once movement in cities becomes autonomous, there will be all sorts of interesting robotics challenges."

Musk also sounded a cautionary note to governments as technology continues to improve efficiency, saying a "universal basic income" will be necessary as there will be "fewer jobs that a robot cannot do better." TT

London

Uber will not be required to install cameras in vehicles after an amended vehicle-for hire bylaw was passed last month.

Councillor Michael van Holst said, “Uber is so popular that by not providing it we’d become kind of a backwards town. Even though we got pushed around, it’s likely in our best interest to simply go this way”.

London Taxi Association spokesperson Roger Caranci said “Uber, they’re bullies. They got what they want. They have a technology that a lot of people like and want to use and want to use worldwide so there is that pressure.”

“We couldn’t even enforce our bylaws which is embarrassing for a city, that’s embarrassing, but they managed to do that to pretty much everybody,” Caranci continued.

Brazil

Uber drivers are employees and deserve benefits, Brazil judge rules.

A Brazilian judge ruled that a driver using the Uber ride-hailing app is an employee of the San Francisco-based company and is entitled to workers' benefits, adding to the global debate over labour rights for drivers on the platform.

Judge Goncalves ordered Uber to pay one driver around BRL 30,000 (AU$12,600) in compensation for overtime, night shifts, holidays and expenses such as gasoline, water and candy for passengers.

The consequences for Uber, if the ruling is upheld, could be far greater if more drivers follow suit and if state and federal regulators and tax agencies start treating it, as the judge suggested, as a transportation company rather than a tech firm.

Uber said in a statement the drivers are free to set their own hours, cancel or pass on trips and use competing apps, making them service providers rather than employees.

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Oh what a feeling!

UBER IN FAR NORTH QLD

Uber is set to launch its services in FNQ on 16 March 2017.

Customer service, accountability and a community emphasis are just a few of the areas where Townsville's taxi industry believes it can top ride-sharing service Uber.

"Of course there is concern from some people out there but there are also plenty of drivers and owners saying 'bring it on'," said Townsville Taxi fleet compliance officer Brett Hoban.

"In our last survey we had a 95 per cent customer service rating and we're determined to keep that and improve. We believe in our drivers, we believe in the pride they take in themselves we believe in supporting locals."

Mr Hoban said the company's local perspective set it apart from the new provider.

"Right off the bat you've got a significant portion of money made by drivers going offshore to the company," he said.

"All the money we make goes into the local economy and there are more than 800 people working for and involved in our industry in Townsville."

Mr Hoban said some of the industry's most significant work was often forgotten.

"We're looking after people with disabilities and do about 150 schools runs," he said.

"We are really public transport and we have to be available 24/7 not just when it is convenient for the driver.

"There are 23 cars that are wheelchair accessible and if necessary will travel 40km to do a job, show me an Uber driver that will do that."

Kieran Rooney

It will be business as usual for Cairns' taxi drivers when Uber launches in Cairns on 16 March.

Cairns Taxis chairman Layne Gardiner said the company would concentrate on providing the same current high standard of service.

"That's what we'll continue on doing," he said

"We won't be changing anything. We won't be dropping our prices. We'll just be giving our same level of service, and it's a safer service, because we've got cameras in every taxi."

"And we've got GPS units to track wherever you are," he added.

In anticipation of the competition entering the local market, Cairns Taxis in 2015 launched a "charm offensive", ordering its drivers to ensure they kept their service, vehicles and uniforms at the highest standard to ensure customer loyalty.

Taxi driver Graeme Leopold-Wooldridge, who has been driving a cab in Cairns for 22 years, believed Cairns Taxis would still deliver a better service than Uber.

"I think people will give Uber a go: people give anything a go," he said.

"But over a longer period of time, this taxi company has delivered well for the community. It's a good service."

Daniel Bateman

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HEALTH APP TO HELP CABBIES

How a mobile app will drive better mental health for cabbies

High levels of psychological stress among taxi drivers have led to a world-first mental health app tailored to the demands of the job

Stressed at work? Tired of sitting down? You could go for a run or a long walk, or maybe just lie in a park.

But it's not so easy if you are a taxi driver and any time out means missing the chance of a fare.

Taxi drivers can spend as much as eight hours simply waiting around during any 12 hour shift, but it's difficult to relax when the clock is ticking and you can't ever be far from the car and a potential fare.

It is a recipe for stress and anxiety that is fuelling levels of psychological distress among drivers at rates that new research suggests are five times worse than the rest of the population.

But University of Melbourne researchers are now aiming to do something about it, developing a mental health mobile phone app that is specifically designed to fit around the needs and working lives of taxi drivers.

"Taxi drivers are a highly vulnerable population, reporting high rates of psychological distress," says researcher Dr Sandra Davidson, a Senior Research Fellow at the Department of General Practice within the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences.

"The majority of urban drivers are from non-English speaking backgrounds and our research shows that they are working long hours, 60-70 hours a week in 12 hour shifts, that involve incredibly long periods of sitting down. But they are also a population that is hard to reach with health interventions because of their unique working environment."

The app, which is still a prototype, offers physical and mental exercises tailored to whatever time a driver can spare, whether inside the car or out. It offers options for a two-minute session, a five-minute session or a 10-minute session.

It includes exercises similar to those recommended for long-haul flights, as well as muscle relaxation to combat anxiety. There are also mindfulness sessions such as listening to guided-imagery as a relaxation tool.

"The ultimate goal is improving the mental health of drivers, but we are focusing also on their physical health as a way to do that," Dr Davidson says. "Muscle tension can build

up in drivers over long periods of time and that can lead into feelings of stress. We know that sitting down for long periods isn't good for you so a lot of our exercises are about breaking up those long periods of sitting down."

The app also reminds drivers to stay hydrated and will link to useful information such as the location of public toilets.

Some previous research has shown that taxi drivers are at higher risk of kidney and urinary tract infections because of the excessive time they spend seated and delaying going to the toilet.

It will also include health tips from other drivers. One driver told the researchers that he lost eight kilograms just by getting out of the cab to open the door for his passengers and getting out to knock on the doors of booked addresses rather than simply tooting his horn.

Dr Davidson is a mental health expert and had identified taxi drivers as a hard to reach and vulnerable group because they are a male-dominated profession that includes many drivers from non-English speaking backgrounds.

She says taxi drivers face a trio of high-risk factors, including generally having low incomes, doing shift work and often being recent migrants.

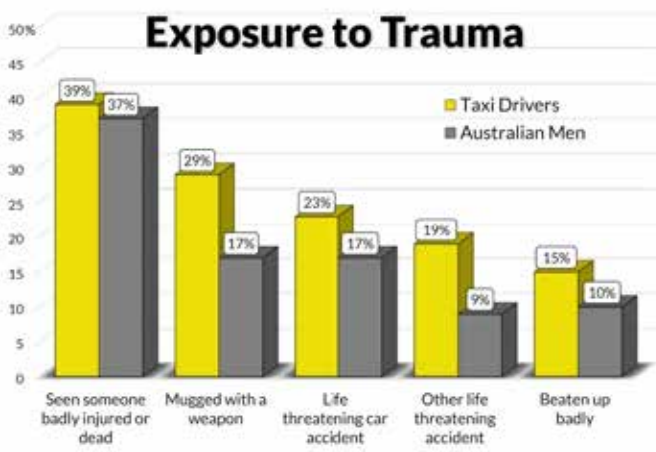
The idea for a mental health mobile phone app came out of Dr Davidson's research on the habits of drivers, based on surveys and interviews. She found that almost all the drivers used smart phones to help pass the time, mainly using them for staying in touch with friends and family, searching the web and social media. But they rarely used technology when they were at home.

"We needed an intervention that could work within the unpredictable breaks they have between jobs, and that could be accessible through their smart phone. We knew they weren't going to take time out to go to a quiet library and spend a lot of time on a mental health site or spend that time when they are at home when they'd rather be playing with their kids or catching up with friends."

"Taxi drivers are an overwhelmingly social bunch – it is the wrong profession for an introvert. So what we want to do is tap into that social connectedness that taxi drivers have."

The prototype of the app is scheduled to be ready for testing among drivers in March and Dr Davidson plans to follow up the testing with feedback surveys and focus group interviews to make sure that they come up with an application that not only improves the health of drivers, but is actually used by them.

Andrew Trounson
University of Melbourne
first published on Pursuit



Taxi drivers reported higher than average levels of stress and trauma in a well-being survey of over 200 drivers at Melbourne Airport's holding yard.

DRIVERLESS AIRPORT SHUTTLE

Trial of a fully autonomous electric vehicle at Christchurch Airport.

HMI Technologies is using French company Navya's 15-person Arma shuttle for the year trial at Christchurch International Airport in New Zealand. The self-driving electric vehicle has no steering wheel.

Testing will be conducted on airport grounds, starting on private roads with no public access, with the long-term aim of moving to public roads once safety issues have been assessed and all regulatory approvals are in place.

The Christchurch region has been hit by a series of earthquakes in recent years. The biggest, in 2011, killed 185 people, but the airport was not damaged.

Dave Verma, the company's director of Australasian driverless vehicle technologies, says the Arma has a range of sensors that constantly detect the environment around it.

"In the event the accelerometers on the vehicle detect an abnormal or unusual movement, the vehicle will stop," he tells WardsAuto. "However, a minor tremor is unlikely to have any effect on the operation of the vehicle.

"If debris is detected, any sizeable obstacles or uneven surfaces caused by an earthquake, or something else out of the ordinary, then the vehicle will stop immediately."

Michael Singleton, the airport's general manager-corporate affairs, says the airport's interest in the trial centres on plans for linking key areas around the facility.

"We hope to eventually see autonomous vehicles operating in and around the airport," Singleton says in a statement. "Before that could happen, we want to understand the infrastructure and operating requirements for these vehicles, to understand the human/technology interface and to build the safety case for autonomous vehicles on our campus."

Verma says the planned research and development is expected to take one to two years.

"Autonomous vehicles are a disruptive technology which may require an equally disruptive business model," says Verma. "We do not necessarily see a 'user-pays' ride model as being the only operational application for this type of transportation and we will be investigating other commercial models as part of our research."

Alan Harman TT

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All-in-one taxi app with eftpos and receipt printer.

CabCueXT is a touchscreen EFTPOS tablet with a built-in receipt printer that also lets drivers receive app bookings.

CabCueXT has been extensively trialled in Victoria with very successful results.

Victorian taxi drivers love its simplicity. No longer do you need to have three separate devices to do the same job. There is less clutter inside the taxi which portrays a clean and professional image.

The device can be used stand-alone to accept card payments, just like any other eftpos machine.

It can also be used by thousands of customers that already use CabCue taxi hailing app.

The service is completely free and drivers get paid a commission on all transactions made through CabCueXT. Shift earnings are transferred daily directly into driver's bank accounts.

The CabCueXT eftpos device also accepts debit and credit card details manually, which is not available with other eftpos devices.

CabCueXT is bridging the gap between taxi payments and taxi-hailing functionality by combining it all in one device. The CabCueXT team is already working on enhancements and new features which will be released on a regular basis.

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CabCue

DRIVER OF THE MONTH

ROSS TOGNOLINI has been driving taxis since 1972 when he started at Yellow Cabs. For Ross, taxi driving is all about the daily challenge of meeting new people and seeing what new adventures he will encounter. He has likened taxi driving to a magical mystery tour - you just never know who your next passenger will be and where they will take you.

2017 FORMULA 1 AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX

Albert Park, Melbourne
23-26 March

For 67 years Grand Prix racing has sat at the pinnacle of world motor sport. First organised in 1950, the FIA Formula 1™ World Championship now embraces more than 900 races; the 2017 Formula 1® Rolex Australian Grand Prix will be the 22nd race staged in Melbourne and the 33rd in Australia.

The inaugural World Championship included just seven rounds, but one of them was the famous Indianapolis 500 and was included only to enhance the 'global' status of that original series. The other six Grand Prix events reflected the sport's European origins, starting at the windswept Silverstone circuit in England and ending on the sweeping banked curves of Monza in Italy.

Nowadays the World Championship encompasses virtually every continent on the planet, with 20 races at each. F1®'s reach extends from Australia to Abu Dhabi, with stops in places like the USA, Mexico, Singapore and other exotic locations.

Throughout its rich history F1® has reflected manufacturers' and rule-makers' concerns with technical innovation, from super-charging and turbo-charging to normally aspirated engines and on to the highly sophisticated 'power units'.

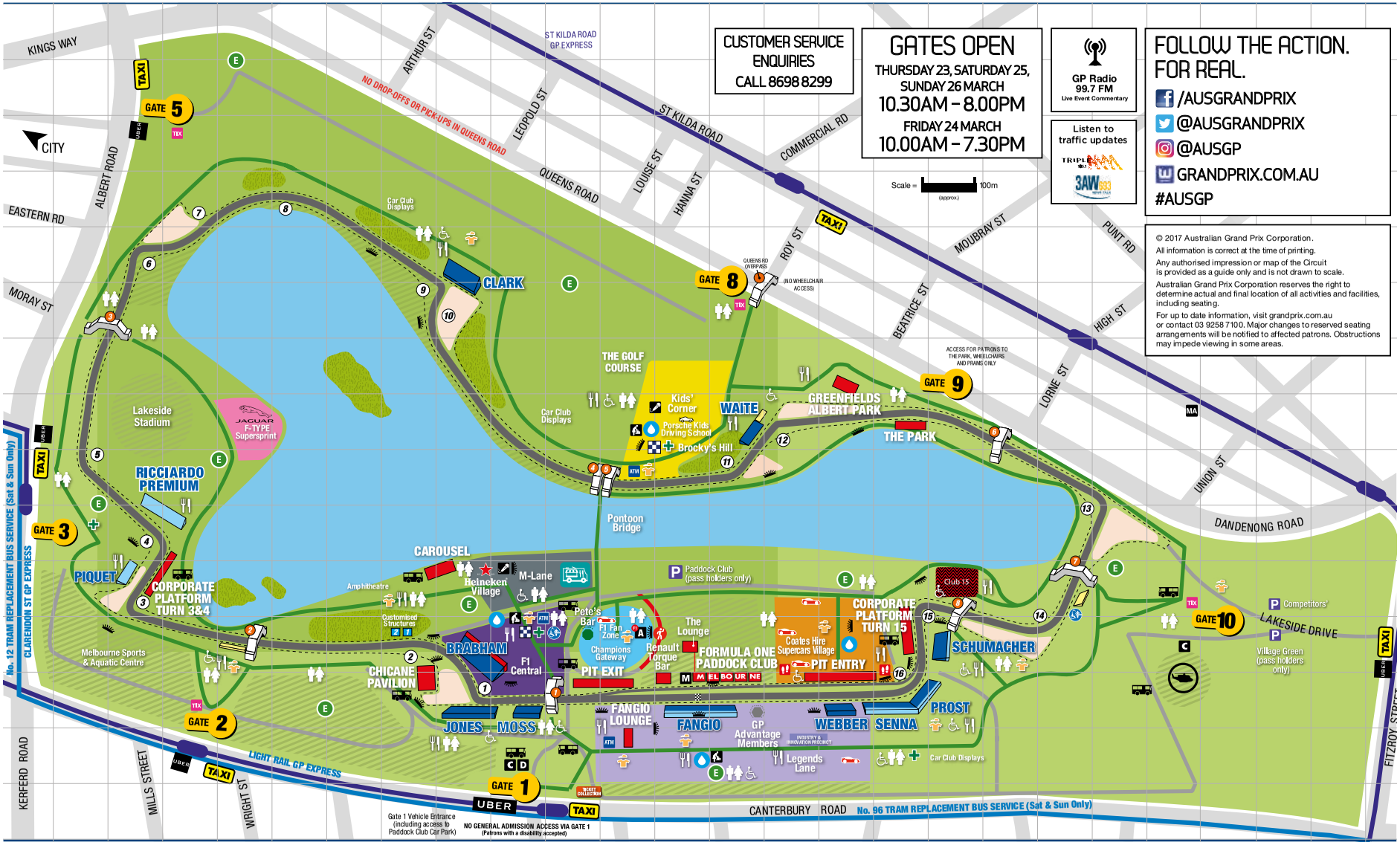
But as with every other area of life, Formula 1® is about people, and about the drivers in particular.

From the first World Champion, Giuseppe Farina in 1950, to the most recent, Nico Rosberg in 2016, men from 16 countries have enjoyed the status of the world's finest driver. Including the Indianapolis 500 winners from 1950-60, there's 107 drivers who are Grand Prix winners.

Australia has two World Champions of its own: three-time champion Jack Brabham (knighted for his services to the sport) and Alan Jones. 21st century has seen Mark Webber and Daniel Ricciardo join their famous compatriots as Grand Prix winners.

Any straw poll of F1® fans and insiders would throw up the names of Fangio, Jim Clark, Alain Prost, Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher as the best we have ever seen.

With a new formula that is expected to reward good aerodynamics and the introduction of wider tyres, experts are tipping the cars to be up to 5 seconds a lap faster. This could see Michael Schumacher's lap record set in 2004 under serious threat.



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The Lounge
BRABHAM
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Coates Hire Supercars Village
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CORPORATE PLATFORM TURN 15
Club 15
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Competitors'
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AUSTRALIAN GT CHAMPIONSHIP

Albert Park, Melbourne
23-26 March

The world's most exotic sports racing cars will descend on Melbourne this month when the Australian GT Championship takes to the sweeping Albert Park circuit.

From the mighty Mercedes, ferocious Ferrari and beautiful Bentley, nine of the world's leading manufacturers will be represented on grid, making for a diverse and eclectic collection of shapes, sounds and colour.

GT3 racing has become a sensation internationally and as interest in the category rises ever further, Australia boasts the fastest growing and strongest national competition anywhere in the world. And it is all part and parcel of the 2017 Formula 1® Rolex Australian Grand Prix.

With a combined value in excess of $20 million, the cars are state of the art masterpieces designed to duke it out on track, while remaining loyal to their road-going beginnings.

In many instances their roots can be traced to Formula 1, with three of the motor racing's most successful names going toe-to-toe in sports car racing.

Ferrari, Mercedes and McLaren have vied for on-track supremacy at the sport's highest level in recent seasons, a battle which has been rekindled in GT racing as the trio produce world class GT racers.

Fans will see some of Australia's great drivers participating including multiple Bathurst winners, Steve Richards (BMW M6 GT3) and John Bowe (Bentley Continental GT3), Craig Baird (Mercedes-AMG GT3), Cameron McConville (Lamborghini Huracan GT3) and the first female in the GT Championship, Melinda Price.

Three more 25-minute races across the weekend will see the 35-car Australian GT field on track with fans able to get up and close with the exotic cars when not out on track by visiting the Coates Hire Supercars Village precinct.

2017 FORMULA 1 AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX

Albert Park, Melbourne

TRACK TIMETABLE

THURSDAY 23 MARCH

10:30	Gates open to public	
10:30 - 10:50	Shannons Historic Demonstration	Track Activity
11:00 - 11:40	Guest Laps & Formula SAE Demonstration	Track Activity
11:50 - 12:10	Shannons Australian GT	Qualifying Practice #1
12:20 - 12:40	Porsche Carrera Cup	Practice Session
12:50 - 13:20	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	Practice Session
13:35 - 13:55	MSS Security Ultimate Speed Comparison	Practice Session
14:05 - 14:25	Shannons Australian GT	Qualifying Practice #2
14:35 - 14:55	Porsche Carrera Cup	Qualifying Session
15:05 - 15:25	MSS Security Ultimate Speed Comparison	Demonstration 1
15:40 - 16:05	Shannons Australian GT	First Race (25 Min)
16:20 - 16:45	Porsche Carrera Cup	First Race (25 Min)
17:00 - 17:10	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	Qualifying #1 (Grid Pos Race 1)
17:20 - 17:30	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	Qualifying #2 (Grid Pos Race 2)
17:45 - 17:55	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	Qualifying #3 (Grid Pos Race 3)
18:05 - 18:15	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	Qualifying #4 (Grid Pos Race 4)
20:00	Gates closed to public	

FRIDAY 24 MARCH

10:00	Gates open to public	
10:00 - 10:20	Shannons Historic Demonstration	Track Activity
10:20 - 10:35	RAAF Roulettes	Air Display
10:45 - 11:10	Shannons Australian GT	Second Race (25 Min)
12:00 - 13:30	Formula One	Practice Session (tbc)
13:50 - 14:20	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	First Race (30 Min)
14:30 - 14:45	MSS Security Ultimate Speed Comparison	Demonstration 2
14:55 - 15:20	Porsche Carrera Cup	Second Race (25 Min)
15:30 - 15:40	RAAF F/A-18 Jet	Air Display
16:00 - 17:30	Formula One	Practice Session (tbc)
17:50 - 18:20	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	Second Race (30 Min)
19:30	Gates closed to public	

SATURDAY 25 MARCH

10:30	Gates open to public	
11:00 - 11:20	Shannons Historic Demonstration	Track Activity
11:30 - 11:50	Ferrari Parade	Track Activity
12:05 - 12:30	Shannons Australian GT	Third Race (25 Min)
12:45 - 13:10	Porsche Carrera Cup	Third Race (25 Min)
13:20 - 13:35	RAAF Roulettes	Air Display
14:00 - 15:00	Formula One	Third Practice Session
15:20 - 15:55	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	Third Race (30 Min)
16:05 - 16:20	MSS Security Ultimate Speed Comparison	Demonstration 3
16:30 - 16:40	RAAF F/A-18 Jet	Air Display
17:00 - 18:00	Formula One	Qualifying Session
20:00	Gates closed to public	

SUNDAY 26 MARCH

10:30	Gates open to public	
11:00 - 11:15	Shannons Historic Parade	Track Activity
11:30 - 11:55	Shannons Australian GT	Fourth Race (25 Min)
12:05 - 12:20	Promoter Activity	Track demonstration laps
12:30 - 12:45	MSS Security Ultimate Speed Comparison	Demonstration 4
13:05 - 13:35	Coates Hire Supercars Challenge	Fourth Race (25 Min)
13:50 - 14:15	Porsche Carrera Cup	Fourth Race (25 Min)
14:25	Formula One	Formula 1 Drivers Photo – Starting Grid
14:30 - 14:40	Formula One	Formula 1 Drivers Parade
14:35 - 14:50	RAAF Roulettes	Air Display
15:10 - 15:20	RAAF F/A-18 Jet	Air Display
15:46 - 15:48	National Anthem	Track Activity
15:48	RAAF C-17A Globemaster Flyover	Air Display
16:00 - 18:00	2017 Formula 1® Rolex Australian Grand Prix (58 Laps)	
20:00	Gates closed to public	

NOTE: This timetable is subject to amendments

TAXI DROP OFF & PICK UP ZONES

Gates 1 and 2 - Canterbury Road

Gates 3 and 5 - Albert Road

Gate 8 - St Kilda Road

Gate 10 - Fitzroy Street

LIMOUSINE BAYS

Gates 1, 2, 5, 8 & 10

MAJOR EVENTS
IN AND AROUND MELBOURNE

Until 5 March

Golf Croquet World Championships
Victorian Croquet Centre, Cairnlea

See the game played at its best by both Australian and international players, including the notorious Egyptian players who hit the ball so hard that the organisers have erected special fencing.

Golf Croquet is like the 'One Day Test' of croquet – it's is a much simpler and quicker version of the game and only takes about 50 minutes to complete a game.

Until 8 March 2017

SUMMER NIGHT MARKET
Queen Victoria 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.

Until 30 April

Asia TOPA: Asia-Pacific Triennial of Performing Arts
Arts Centre, Melbourne

An artistic celebration of our relationship with contemporary Asia. Vital, fresh and always unpredictable, Asia TOPA offers a city-wide window onto the creative imaginations fuelling the many cultures of our region. The dazzling array of artists featured in Asia TOPA will provide new ways of understanding the deep connections that run between us all.

10 - 13 March

INVERLOCH JAZZ FESTIVAL

The small seaside town of Inverloch comes alive as Jazz kicks off with 40 outstanding bands and musicians.

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.

10 - 13 March

MOOMBA FESTIVAL
on the banks of the Yarra River

Fireworks, parade, birdman rally, kid's activities and more. The festival attracts more than one million visitors to the sun-soaked banks of the Yarra to share in the vibrancy and spirit of our much loved city.

Monday 13 March is the spectacular Moomba Parade. Starting near the Shrine of Remembrance and finishing near Linlithgow Avenue, the lively procession brings a flurry of colour and movement to Melbourne's St Kilda Road.

17 - 26 March

Castlemaine State Festival
Victoria's Premier Regional Arts Festival
Castlemaine and surrounding regions

A ten day extravaganza of art, music, film, culture and fun. The program is packed full of captivating events in some of Australia's finest Gold Rush era venues.

Set amongst the artist hamlet of Castlemaine and surrounds, a town of 7,000 swells to over 15,000 during peak festival time.

1 - 19 March

MELBOURNE FASHION FESTIVAL

Various venues in and around Melbourne

An annual celebration of fashion, beauty, business and creative endeavour for everyone to enjoy.

A true feast for the senses, the Festival presents the most stylish week-long entertainment on offer including world-class runway shows featuring Australia's established and emerging designers, state-of-the-art production, beauty workshops, industry seminars, forums, live entertainment and more.

3 - 5 March

Australian International Airshow

Avalon Airport, Beach Road, Lara

The skies above Avalon Airport will again reverberate to the sound of thunder, when the 14th Australian International Airshow gets under way.

From the thunder of military fighter jets to the snarl of warbirds, a unique mix of military, commercial, antique, airsport, rotor and general aviation aircraft will thrill visitors.

4 March

White Night Ballarat

Saturday 4 March 7pm until
Sunday 5 March 7am
Lydiard Street and Sturt Street

It is the city as you know it, but reimagined and transformed under the ephemeral cloak of night. The event will weave a spell over the Ballarat's CBD, transforming the impossible into the possible through installation, lighting, exhibitions, street performances, film, music, dance and interactive events.

25 - 26 March

2017 FESTIVAL OF WOMEN'S CYCLING

Various venues in and around Brunswick

A range of women's riding events will be held over the weekend of March 25 & 26 empowering women to try different types of cycling and listen to talks and take part in social or competitive rides.

Events include a 'Come & try track cycling' session at Harrison Street Veledrome, Brunswick East and a breakfast and casual ride starting at Roberts Reserve in Brunswick.

29 March - 2 April

Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show

Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, Nicholson Street, Carlton

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show, at the World Heritage Listed Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, is set to return with an explosion of colour and design and after 20 years still remains the biggest annual flower and garden show in the Southern Hemisphere.

Gardens by Twilight is on Friday 31 March and evening visitors will be able to stroll through the entire Show until 9:30pm.

29 March - 23 April

Melbourne International Comedy Festival

various venues in and around Melbourne

As Australia's largest provider of laughs, Melbourne Comedy Festival leaves no stone unturned (or un-tickled) with free family entertainment all school holidays, hundreds of the world's funniest presenting stellar shows each evening and a late-night Festival Club that keeps the vibe alive through to the wee hours.

The Festival hosts the world's most engaging, exciting and inspiring comics, drawing in and delighting huge audiences from Melbourne and beyond.

industry statistics

JANUARY 2017

Taxi Licence zone	Licence type	# of licences 30/6/16	# of licences 31/1/17	Changes since 30/6/16
Metro	Conventional	4,217	4,147	-70
	WAT	443	447	4
	Total	4,660	4,594	-66
Urban	Conventional	420	418	-2
	WAT	85	79	-6
	Total	505	497	-8
Regional	Conventional	264	273	9
	WAT	72	75	3
	Total	336	348	12
Country	Conventional	127	128	1
	WAT	35	35	0
	Total	162	163	1
Totals	Conventional	5,028	4,966	-62
	WAT	635	636	1
	Total	5,663	5,602	-61

Number of drivers

Active drivers 15,987
drivers who have recorded at least one shift last year
Accredited drivers (taxi, hire car & bus) 53,002

Compliance outcomes

Vehicle Inspections 1,258
Rectification Notices 101
Infringement Notices 15
Official written warning notices 13

Hire Car Licence	# of licences 30/6/16	# of licences 30/1/17	Changes since 30/6/16
Metropolitan	1,136	1,139	3
Country	63	64	1
Special Purpose Vehicles	966	972	6
Restricted	610	628	18
Totals	2,775	2,794	28

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

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Schmidt Electronic Labs.....9
Sod-1 Plus 33
The Owners Association 31
Trinity Body Works 17
Victorian Hire Car Association .19
Vic. Taxi & Hire Car Families 15
Victoria Taxi Club 48
Yarra Finance 21

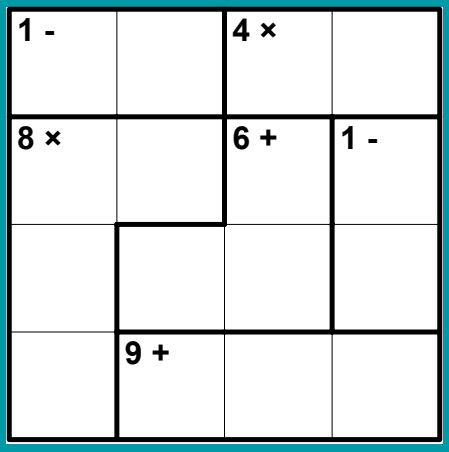
March 2017
Cruise shipping
at Station Pier

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)
Fri 3 Mar	Pacific Eden	3 Mar 0700	3 Mar 1600
Fri 3 Mar	Seabourn Encore	3 Mar 1000	3 Mar 2300
Sat 4 Mar	Radiance of the Seas	4 Mar 0800	4 Mar 1800
Sun 5 Mar	Golden Princess	5 Mar 0600	5 Mar 1600
Sun 12 Mar	Sun Princess	12 Mar 0800	12 Mar 1800
Mon 13 Mar	Queen Victoria	13 Mar 0800	13 Mar 1800

Arrival Date	Cruise Ship	Arrival (approx)	Departure (approx)
Tue 14 Mar	Artania	14 Mar 0800	14 Mar 2000
Wed 15 Mar	Pacific Eden	15 Mar 1200	15 Mar 2100
Thu 16 Mar	Costa Luminosa	15 Mar 8000	overnight stay
Fri 17 Mar	Costa Luminosa		17 Mar 1800
Sat 18 Mar	Golden Princess	18 Mar 0600	18 Mar 1600
Fri 31 Mar	Golden Princess	31 Mar 0600	31 Mar 1600

INKY PUZZLE



Fill in the blank squares so that each row and each column contain all of the digits 1 thru 4. The heavy lines indicate areas (called cages) that contain groups of numbers that can be combined (in any order) to produce the result shown in the cage, with the indicated math operation. For example, 12× means you can multiply the values together to produce 12. Numbers in cages may repeat, as long as they are not in the same row or column.

SUDOKU

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

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

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