

TAXI

TALK

VOICE OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

September

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Victorian Taxi Association

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INSIDE...

4 Victorian Taxi Association editorial

Time for action on ride share apps.

6

Bailee drivers

What is a bailee driver?.

12

Licence statistics

Taxi and hire car licence and assignment statistics for last month

18

Taxi Insurance

Third-party insurance is now compulsory

22

Taxi Services Commission

Updates on issues affecting the Victorian Taxi Industry

32

Events Calendar

Dates and locations of various Melbourne major events

34

World News

Articles regarding overseas taxi industries



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Taxi Talk magazine, a monthly publication for the Victorian taxi industry, is published by Trade Promotions Pty Ltd in collaboration with the Victorian Taxi Association Inc (VTA). The VTA is the peak industry body in Victoria, fostering the interests and wellbeing of taxi-cab drivers, taxi-cab permit holders and Taxi Booking Services across the state.

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TIME FOR ACTION

on ride share apps



David Samuel
VTA CEO

Please do not assume that my editorial this month is an attempt to cover off on everything that is going on within our industry at the moment. I simply don't have time or space to achieve this. We have certainly embarked on a new and challenging path.

A number of significant issues have arisen since the last edition of **Taxi Talk** and I am proud of the way my staff have dealt with them in a pragmatic and responsive fashion. As a result, we have been able to deliver a number of sensible changes to government process and policy.

I must start by noting the sad and sudden passing of Philip (Phil) Franet during August. I did not work with Phil but understand that he was an industry stalwart who followed his father into taxis in Victoria. Phil held positions as both CEO and President of the VTA and we thank him for his service to the industry. Our thoughts are with his family.

I am of course aware that the headline issues remain for many within the industry and there is still a great degree of anxiety. I get reminded of this on a daily basis when I receive correspondence from various industry participants. I recently got an email from an existing licence holder who relayed her story to me. This is a person who worked hard for many years only to find at the end of that working life that the thing they thought they had invested in no longer contained the value it once did, completely turning this person's life on its head. I don't want to re-open a debate about the treatment of licence holders, but I do not understand how one cannot feel for people who find themselves in this situation, regardless of political persuasion and what economic doctrine one embraces.

Of the issues that we are currently dealing with the one that perhaps poses the most significant long term threat to our service is the emergence of ride sharing products - for example Uber X. These providers refuse to abide by the two most critical legal underpinnings of any commercial passenger service; that the vehicle is licensed to provide the service, and the driver is accredited to do so. Ride sharing services adhere to neither of these principles and are therefore simply not legal.

Both of these fundamentals are vital to sustainable commercial passenger services. This is not, as our critics would suggest, because we want to retain high licence values and overcharge customers - quite the opposite. The law has been established in its current form, after significant consideration and countless reviews, to ensure that the travelling public is protected. The law should not be changed or ignored to meet the

inadequate and unsafe business models of new market entrants. We are all familiar with the view that regulation can stifle competition, however, that is not the case with the licensing of drivers, vehicles and booking services - these regulations exist to protect the customer and the driver.

The idea that the market will take account for safety is absurd. Safety and service have to be pro-actively managed, you can't deal with either after the event. The notion that a 'star rating' on a smart phone application can replace criminal background checks and vehicle licensing is beyond ridiculous.

The rules for the provision of taxi services, especially as they relate to consumer safety, should apply equally to all. They should not be bent to meet the flawed ride sharing business model - it is a slippery slope.

In any case, those who run these services have made a clear decision that it is cheaper and easier to avoid the law than operate their business within it. This is the model they have adopted around the world, beginning in North America. Unless the authorities revise the law to suit their requirements these large multinational firms simply ignore the law and pay the fines - although some drivers are reporting they are not as generous as they claim to be in this respect.

These products are simply thumbing their nose at governments and regulators around the world for their own commercial advantage. It might appear cool and new but this is nothing more than a cynical attempt to earn a quick dollar at the expense of our community and ultimately sustainable commercial passenger services.

I can assure you a lot of work is being done in this space and I hope to be able to share more with you next month. Suffice to say this is not an issue that is peculiar to Victoria and as a result, a national, if not international, approach is necessary.

Please take care and do not hesitate to get in touch if you have an issue. We are always happy to hear from you. 

BAILEE DRIVERS

What is a bailee driver?

Taxi drivers whose sole responsibility in the industry is to drive shifts using their Permit Holder's (formerly known as Operators) taxi are called 'bailee drivers'.

The term 'bailee' is derived from the word 'bailment' which is the legal term for the kind of arrangement between a driver and a Permit Holder for use of the taxi. If a relationship exhibits certain characteristics, it will, according to law, be a bailment relationship (no matter how the parties or anyone else decides to describe it). Those characteristics are as follows:

1. the delivery of the exclusive right of possession by the bailor (Permit Holder);
2. the voluntary assumption of possession by the bailee (driver);
3. an assumption of the responsibility by the bailee (driver) to keep the goods (taxi) safe; and
4. the obligation to return the thing bailed (the taxi).

The essence of bailment is that possession is transferred from the bailor and is voluntarily accepted by the bailee, but ownership is not. This is clearly the case between a Permit Holder and a taxi driver.

Bailee Drivers are self-employed and are individual small businesses. They agree to terms with Permit



Holders to take possession of and use a licensed taxi for a period of time and in exchange pay a percentage of the earnings, and at the end of that period of time return the taxi to the Permit Holder. This agreement may be formalised in a written bailment agreement. The nature of the bailment relationship has been tested in court several times and is a clearly understood legal structure under which taxi drivers and Permit Holder (Operators) work.

There has been some speculation in the industry of late about whether taxi drivers should still be referred to as 'bailee drivers'. So is a taxi driver still a bailee driver? Yes.

The idea that as a result of recent reforms bailee drivers no longer exist is false. There have been no changes in the recent reforms which affect the legal nature of the bailment relationship between drivers and Permit Holders (Operators).

The introduction of 'implied conditions' are, in practice, a set of minimum standards which apply to all taxi bailment relationships, whether

the two parties have a written bailment agreement or not.

There have been some attempts in these implied conditions which demonstrate a desire by some to imply a level of control by Permit Holders over bailee drivers which does not exist. For example, the requirement that Permit Holders grant drivers four weeks unpaid leave annually. In reality, the Permit Holder has no authority to grant or deny leave to a bailee driver. The driver is free to continue to drive or suspend driving for the Permit Holder at any time, for any period - both parties are independent business people.

Despite the fact the Taxi Services Commission have chosen to call their template agreement a 'driver agreement', the name of the document does not change the legal relationship between the parties. It is in the eyes of the law, still a bailment agreement.

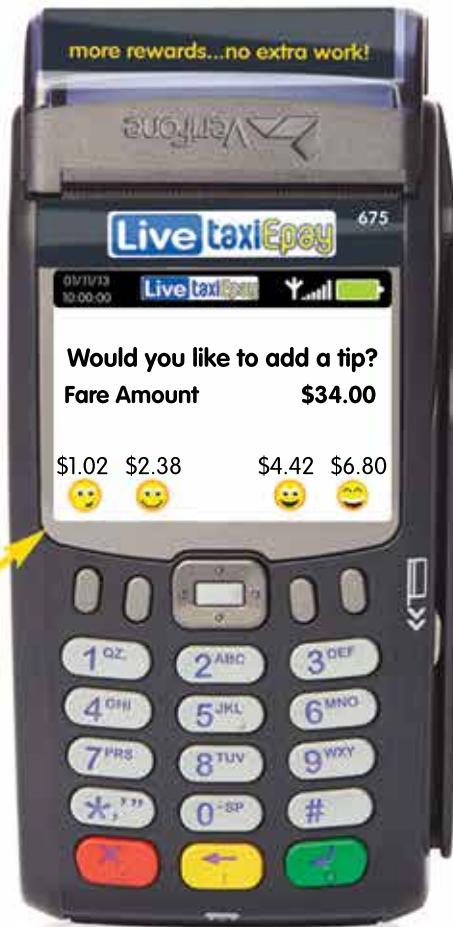
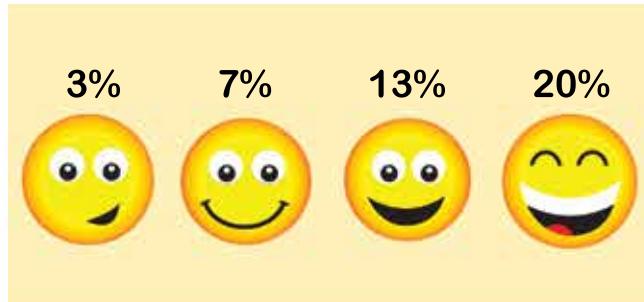
The VTA will soon release a revised model bailment agreement, please email admin@victaxi.com.au if you would like us to send you a copy when finalised. ♣

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VTA MODEL bailment agreement

As we have been reporting for some time now, the VTA has developed a new model bailment agreement.

This new agreement will retain the practical and operational clauses that still apply from the existing model agreement, with revisions and additions which account for the new driver agreement implied conditions.

The VTA are grateful for the feedback of several experienced operators on our draft bailment agreement which is now final pending response from the TSC on two

important issues that have been identified in the past fortnight.

The TSC's current 'driver agreement template' contains a significant error in relation to the insurance and indemnity provisions and is not consistent with the implied conditions.

If you have used this agreement you should discard it.

It has also been identified that the implied conditions which relate to the 45/55 sharing of the gross fare box are written in such a way that would require Permit Holders (Operators) to pay 55% of 'metered' fares to drivers, rather than actual fares collected.

This is particularly relevant in the case of set-run and contract ar-

rangements where fares collected may not match the amount shown on the meter (which is permitted under the law).

The TSC have confirmed that this was not their intention and have advised that industry participants should continue current practice until the issue can be addressed in the implied conditions.

Once a response to these issues has been provided by the TSC we will distribute our model bailment agreement for use.

If you would like us to send you a copy, please email your details to admin@victaxi.com.au.

The VTA encourages all Permit Holders and drivers to ensure they have a written bailment agreement. ✶

REGION news



The VTA held a round of region meetings during August. The meetings took place in Ballarat, Bendigo, Sale and Cobram.

The meetings provided an opportunity for the VTA to bring members up-to-date with the Government reform implementation and the latest industry news.

There was lively discussion on matters of regional significance.

The main issues discussed revolved around the country price notification system, 45/55 driver-operator split, licence zones, and the MPTP.

The VTA thanks all those who attended, contributed to the conversation and shared their experiences and insights. ✶



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MORE PASSENGERS at Melbourne Airport



Taxi drivers may have experienced increased work opportunities at Melbourne Airport due to growth in passenger traffic over the past year.

The airport has reported that more than 7.7 million international and 23.3 million domestic passengers came through Melbourne Airport during the 2013/14 financial year. This is a growth of 9% for international and 2% for domestic passengers, compared to last year.

Melbourne was a popular destination for Asian visitors with a large number of international passengers arriving from Japan, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and China.

Taxi drivers do a fantastic job transporting passengers to and from the airport, and this passenger growth is an incentive to continue servicing Melbourne Airport, as more passengers means more taxi work. .

One of the first people to make an impression on a tourist is often a taxi driver. By continuing to provide a first rate service, not only does the driver enhance the visitors' experience, but it influences them to use taxis again during their stay.

The Victorian Taxi Association continues to represent the taxi driver community in its dealings with Melbourne Airport and presents the views that are shared with them when possible. ♣

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CONFERENCE - LANGHAM HOTEL, SOUTHBANK / GALA - ZINC, FEDERATION SQUARE

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2014 - 50th anniversary of the Victorian Taxi Association

In celebrating this milestone, the VTA is hosting the 2014 VTA Conference on Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 September.

The 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner and Cocktail Hour is on Tuesday 23 September at Zinc, Federation Square. This impressive venue is located on the banks of the Yarra River with breathtaking views. Guest speakers and entertainment are sure to make for a memorable night.

Sponsorship opportunities were filled early, allowing the VTA to keep costs for attendees low.

Visit the VTA website for registration details
www.victaxi.com.au.

Registration closes Friday 12 September.

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VICTORIAN TAXI LICENCE STATISTICS



\$284,429

transfers

average metro licence transfer
value for the month of
July 2014

All data on this page is provided
by the Taxi Services
Commission and is for
the month of
July 2014

Monthly Compliance outcomes

Taxi Inspections	1,342
Rectification Notices	288
Infringement Notices	42
Notices of Unroadworthiness	10
Official Warnings	10

HIRE CAR LICENCE VALUE

\$35,270

average metro hire car licence
transfer value for the month of
July 2014

Number of Victorian Hire Vehicle Licences

Metropolitan Hire Cars	997
Country Hire Cars	85
Special Purpose Vehicles	693
Restricted Hire Cars	976
TOTAL	2,751

Number of Taxi Licences

Metropolitan	including Peak Services and 507 WAT vehicles	4,539
Urban & Large Regional	including 76 WAT vehicles	441
Regional	including 74 WAT vehicles	325
Country	including 37 WAT vehicles	164
Total	including 694 WAT vehicles	5,469

Number of drivers

Active drivers	33,119
Accredited drivers	16,130

Assignments

average metro assignment price \$2,052

Licence transfers

metro taxis	7	country taxis	0
outer suburban	1	hire car	10
urban taxis	0	special	5

Licences issued

taxi	220	special vehicles	5
hire car	5	RH vehicles	5

The metro taxi licence average price of \$284,429 is based on the 7 genuine market based transactions that occurred in the metropolitan zone during July 2014.

The Taxi Services Commission's standard practice is to only count those licence transfers where a genuine market based transaction has occurred. They do this by applying a number of standard business rules. The aim of these business rules is to identify genuine market based transfers of taxi licences and to base average price calculations on these transactions only.

Therefore, where it appears a non-market based licence transfer has occurred, these transactions are excluded in the calculation of licence values. An example is where a licence holder transfers the licence to a new business name but still retains ownership of the licence. ♦



Driver of the Month

Our Driver of the Month for September 2014 is Zaheer Abbas

Zaheer drives for West Suburban Taxis and says that WST is a great depot. He enjoys driving during the day and enjoys chatting with his passengers. ☺

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Always refer to the product disclosure statement for product information before making any financial decisions

QFM Taxi 69 brake pads

One of the most popular disc brake pads QFM Taxi 69 is now available in Victoria.

Formulated and developed especially for taxi use by Queensland Friction Materials, Taxi 69 has proven to be the leader in braking for taxi vehicles especially in NSW and Queensland and is now available from H & B Auto Parts, 9 Irene Street, Coburg North, Phone 9354 6055.

Taxi 69 has long pad wear life, great pedal feel, is very kind on rotors and has very little dust. When it comes to handling the high heat

generated by frequent and sometimes heavy braking, Taxi 69 maintains its stopping power and low fade characteristics.

Like many other products, with brake pads there are false economies.

Whilst the initial purchase price for some pads maybe low and in some cases high, some of these brake pads struggle to make the first service check and often do not make the second.

A strength with Taxi 69 is that many operators will not need to change brake pads until well after the second service, the bottom line for Taxi 69 is that it is good value for money.

To reduce the possibility of noise especially in FG Falcons, Taxi 69 has specialised shims fitted, which has overcome many noise issues currently experienced with this popular vehicle.

Queensland Friction Materials have been manufacturing disc brake pads at Nerang Qld since 1988 and has an extensive range of part numbers to meet most vehicle applications. Taxi 69 is manufactured from a ceramic based formulation, combined with polymer modification to produce a disc pad that is ideal for taxi use.

For additional product and company information go to www.qfm.com.au ♦



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Photo shows roof light with optional twin 55 watt weather proof long life spot lights

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Taxi insurance third-party compulsory

From 30 September 2014, it will be a regulatory requirement for all Victorian taxi operators to hold a third-party property insurance policy for all taxis they operate.

Below is an extract from the Implied Conditions section 162L(1) of the Act, effective on 30 June 2014.

INSURANCE

3.1. From 30 September 2014, the Operator must maintain one or more policies of insurance providing cover of at least \$5,000,000 for each Taxi-cab driven by the Driver against liability in respect of property damage caused by or arising out of the use of the Taxi-cab.

3.2. The policies must:

- a) be issued by a corporation authorised under the Insurance Act 1973 (Cth) to carry on an insurance business;
- b) be held in the Operator's own name; and
- c) not be held in any name other than the

Operator's. For example, a policy held in the name of a person other than the Operator with the Operator as a beneficiary will not be sufficient to comply with condition 3.1.

3.3. The Operator is responsible for and will pay any applicable excess on the policy payable in relation to a claim involving the Operator's vehicle.

3.4. At any time during the term of the driver agreement, an authorised representative of the TSC may request evidence from the Operator which demonstrates that the Operator has in place a current insurance policy as required under condition

3.1. The Operator must provide such evidence to the reasonable satisfaction of the authorised representative.

3.5. The Operator must ensure that the insurance pol-



icy or policies are current, and must provide a copy to the Driver on request.

3.6. Subject to condition 7.4(b), the Operator must indemnify the Driver for vehicle damage (including damage to the Taxi-cab) arising out of the use of the Operator's Taxi-cab, and for costs including legal costs associated with such vehicle damage.

3.7. If the Operator holds a policy of:

- a) public liability insurance; or
- b) personal injury insurance, for the Driver in relation to the driver agreement, the Operator must keep the following records (and must provide these records to the TSC and/or the Driver on request within a reasonable time):
 - a) whether the Operator agrees to maintain the policy for the duration of the driver agreement; and
 - b) the expiry date of the policy; and
 - c) either of the following for the policy –
 - i) the policy information; or
 - ii) how the policy information can be obtained from the Operator.

3.8. If an Incident occurs while the Driver is in possession of the Taxi-cab, the Driver must:

- a) tell the Operator about the Incident as soon as possible (including, where possible, the details of all the people involved, witnesses, injuries suffered and damage to property); and
- b) as soon as possible, give to the Operator, or the Operator's insurer on request, copies of any statements the Driver makes to the police or any other person about the Incident. ♣

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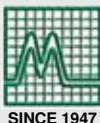
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From February this year to May 2015, the beyondblue National Roadshow will travel over 30,000 kilometres in a big blue bus through every state and territory in Australia, visiting hundreds of communities across the 61 Medicare Local regions. Along the way, more than 200 events are being held to encourage all Australians to 'Take 1 step' for better mental health.

At any given time, over 2 million Australians have anxiety and more than 1 million have depression – these are very common conditions. Unfortunately, more than half of those experiencing a mental health condition don't seek help. A high proportion of people who take their lives have untreated depression and in Australia more than 2000 people die by suicide every year. This is more than 2000 too many.

beyondblue research shows there is considerable stigma associated with having depression and anxi-

ety, and people often have negative views of themselves, feeling embarrassed and thinking it is a sign of weakness. Other people often hold negative views of people with mental health problems. This combined stigma can stop people accessing treatment, getting employment and housing, and it may also affect their quality of life and personal relationships. The stigma and discrimination associated with depression and anxiety is often reported to be worse than the illnesses themselves.



the beyondblue National Roadshow

This article is a recount by Kimberley, a beyondblue Roadshow team member, as the team travels around the Northern Territory.

The woman glanced over at the bus, her steps slowed as she passed. I extended a beyondblue showbag to her. She cautiously took it. "Have you heard of beyondblue?" I asked.

She nodded and paused. "My son took his life five years ago."

The pain in her eyes was crushing. We were at the Tennant Creek Show. All around us, the crowd of mainly Aboriginal children, teens and families were enjoying one of the biggest events of the year. But beneath the joy of that one day, the underlying reality of life in the red centre can be in stark contrast.

Suicide rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are approximately twice those of non-Indigenous Australians.

Suicide is the leading cause of death in men under the age of 45 and women under 35, and accounts for around a quarter of all deaths in people aged 15 to 29. Every year in Australia more than 62,000 people attempt to take their own lives.

All along the Roadshow route, we've been approached by people touched by suicide. They've lost sons, brothers, uncles, fathers, best mates, husbands, partners, daughters, sisters, aunts, mothers, wives...

For every person who takes his or her life (2535 people in Australia in 2012), countless others are left to grieve. It is heartbreaking.

The situation in rural Australia is complex. There are too few mental health services. In the Aboriginal communities we passed through, I couldn't help but wonder – where are the opportunities to enable kids to break out of the cycle of unemployment, lack of housing, substance use and violence issues (all risk factors for poor mental health).

How do we truly 'close the gap'? I don't know the answer.

An Aboriginal Elder working in youth services across the Barkly – a massive region spanning some

320,000km² – was desperate in his summary of the situation.

He told me his service had assessed and found 110 kids aged between 10 and 17 in need of mental health services. Only nine had received any services. He told me suicide attempts in the region were common. It is hard not to share in his feelings of hopelessness.

What can we as individuals, communities and organisations do to reduce the prevalence of suicide in our communities?

A good start may simply be talking... talking to reduce stigma and myths about suicide and about mental health conditions in general. Talking to the point where people feel comfortable and empowered to put their hand up if they're struggling, because they know, in response, they'll be supported.

I know we will continue to hear heartbreak stories of lives cut short and we must do better at supporting the survivors.

In a positive step, beyondblue has developed new resources with the Hunter Institute of Mental Health, proudly funded with donations from the Movember Foundation. The Way Back booklets will now be with us out on the road (and can be downloaded from our website).

I hope that they will provide individuals experiencing the pain, hopelessness and despair following an attempted suicide, with practical guidance and a sense that the future can be brighter.

If you know someone who may benefit, please let them know about these booklets. The booklets are available for free download at the beyondblue.org.au

- Finding your way back – A resource for people who have attempted suicide
- Guiding their way back – A resource for people who are supporting someone after a suicide attempt
- Finding our way back – A resource for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples after a suicide attempt. ♣



Marnie Williams CE Taxi Services Commission

INDU

As the industry adjusts to several key reforms, the Taxi Services Commission (TSC) is beginning to see the results of these important changes.

The TSC recognises that the taxi industry is culturally and linguistically diverse. As such, four driver-related brochures are now available on the TSC website <www.taxi.vic.gov.au> in Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu and Arabic.

The included brochures cover the Knowledge test, the new taxi licences, information on the driver agreement and dispute resolution process and the public register.

Permit holders should note that the TSC requires five days notice to allocate and courier registration plates to VicRoads or the Road Safety Inspection Centre (RSI) sites.

To avoid disappointment, and the need to cancel bookings at short notice, please take this timeframe into account when registering a vehicle.

The TSC recently published a guidance note to assist drivers and permit holders in determining which terms can be included in an agreement, and which may not.

You can find the guidance note and the driver agreement template on the driver agreement page of the TSC website. ♦

EO on **STRY** **UPDATE**

Drivers on the Public Register

The public register has been introduced to make the industry more transparent and accountable to users of taxis, hire cars and driving instructors. The introduction of the public register was recommended by the Taxi Industry Inquiry and was accepted by the Victorian Government. From 30 September 2014, changes to the public register will mean more information about industry participants will be accessible online.

Home addresses of taxi drivers will not be published on the register. The only details about drivers that will appear on the register are his or her name, DC number, accreditation status and accreditation endorsements.

However, the business details of drivers who are also

permit holders will be published. These details include the permit holder's business telephone number, fax number, postal address, email address and number of taxi licences operated. If your business and personal contact details are the same, you may wish to provide alternative business details to the TSC. This could be a Post Office Box, or your accountant's business address.

Information on the register will be refreshed at 7:00 am each business day. If you have already made a request to have certain information excluded from the public register, your details will not be included on the register until a decision has been made in relation to your request. Decisions will not commence being made until 30 September 2014. ♣

eNewsletters are the main way the Taxi Services Commission communicates with the industry about the reforms.

Encourage your colleagues to sign up to receive the monthly Taxi eNews at <www.taxi.vic.gov.au>. You can also follow them on Twitter @taxicommission. ♣

Cutting red tape for taxi brokers

As part of the reforms to the taxi industry, designated taxi traders (commonly known as 'taxi brokers') are no longer required to be authorised by the TSC.

The TSC has also revoked some of the rules for taxi brokers, in order to reduce regulatory burdens and improve industry efficiency.

Authorisation of taxi brokers

The TSC no longer authorises persons as taxi brokers. Instead, any natural person or company that is not insolvent (under voluntary administration, liquidation and receivership, or bankruptcy) is authorised to trade in taxi licences.

Reporting and other requirements

Taxi brokers are no longer required to disclose transfer fees or meet other reporting requirements.



Template transfer & assignment agreements

Previously endorsed transfer and assignment agreements have been removed from the TSC website and new sample agreements are now available. These may be used by taxi brokers or parties if they wish to do so.

Proof of identity requirements

Taxi brokers are no longer able to undertake a 'proof of identity'

check for any parties on behalf of the TSC. Instead, certified copies of proof of identity documents should be sent to the TSC along with the transfer application form and authority to act.

These changes are now effective. However, it's important to remember that taxi licence traders may still be subject to other legislative provisions, such as the Estate Agents Act 1980 and the Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012. ♦

New driver protection screens



The TSC has approved a new taxi driver protection screen for Toyota Camry models dating from 2012.

To comply with taxi licence conditions, permit holders with Camry taxis in the metropolitan and urban zones must purchase the approved screen by 31 December 2014.

In country and regional zones, permit holders must purchase the approved screen after 31 December 2014 – if a driver requests the screen.

Whilst the date for compliance is 31 December 2014, the TSC strongly recommends that permit holders with Camry taxis purchase a screen as soon as possible to improve the safety of taxi drivers.

The full requirements for taxi driver protection screens are set out in taxi-cab licence conditions. ♦

Changes to payment methods

From 30 June 2014, a number of changes to TSC processes mean that personal cheques are no longer accepted as payment.

Acceptable methods of payment are displayed on all TSC tax invoices.

- Driver accreditation payments may be paid by mail, at a VicRoads office or in person at the TSC.

- Driving instructor fees may only be paid by mail, or in person at the TSC.
- Licensing payments can be made on the TSC website, by mail, over the phone, or in person at any Australia Post office.

Other fees and charges can be made in person at the TSC customer service centre, with a bank

cheque or money order. However, the TSC does not accept payments at the customer service centre between 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm daily.

Please note that there has been a CPI increase for TSC fees and charges. This increase applies annually on 1 July. Payments made after this date specifying prior year fees will only be accepted when attached with a TSC invoice. ♦



Compliance Services - Operation BOSS Benchmark of Safety and Standards

As part of the TSC Compliance Monitoring Strategy, the Compliance Services Branch (CSB) is changing its benchmarking methodology to give a more accurate picture of standards within the metropolitan taxi fleet.

The Taxi Quality Rating (TQR) uses a numeric rating score from 1 (best

quality) to 7 (worst quality). In 2013, the TQR benchmark rating was measured at 2.93 for metropolitan taxis, 2.75 for urban taxis and 2.25 for country taxis.

During 2014-15, the CSB will be conducting regular full-day benchmarking inspections at Melbourne Airport.

Instead of inspecting taxis that are picking up fares at the airport, taxis will now be inspected when dropping off passengers at Departures Drive. This method will mean a broader cross-section of the metropolitan fleet can be assessed and scored. ♦



From 30 June 2014, those seeking accreditation as taxi drivers in the metropolitan and urban and large regional taxi zones and metropolitan hire car drivers, need to pass relevant modules of the Knowledge test.

From 1 January 2015, drivers renewing their accreditation in these zones will also be required to pass relevant modules of the Knowledge test if they have less than five years of continuous driver accreditation experience and want to continue to drive in those zones.

Visit the TSC website to see which modules you'll need to complete.

There are four locations at which you can sit the Knowledge test:

1. IT Futures, 1/424 St Kilda Road, **Melbourne**
2. The Challenge Centre, 3/68 Lambeck Drive, **Tullamarine**
3. MEGT Institute, 251 Maroondah Highway, **Ringwood**
4. Nepean Industry Edge Training (NIET), 405 Nepean Highway, **Frankston**

The TSC has received many enquiries from drivers interested in undertaking training to prepare to sit the Knowledge test.

A verbal tutorial and some practice questions are now available online at <<http://practice.driverknowledge.com.au/>>.

Although you are not required to undertake training in order to sit any component of the Knowledge test,

there are also three optional training courses available.

Drivers in the country hire car zone are not required to pass the Knowledge test, but still require driver accreditation.

Accredited drivers can currently renew for a further nine months, allowing time to undertake the relevant Knowledge modules.

For more details on these, please visit <www.taxi.vic.gov.au>. ♦

Taxi and hire car age limits

The TSC has engaged Monash University Accident Research Centre (MUARC) to conduct research into taxi and hire car age limits.

MUARC's research includes reviewing existing vehicle age limits and making recommendations to the TSC on the most appropriate policy settings that could apply to the operating life of taxis and hire cars in the future.

MUARC will consult with industry stakeholders during the review period.

The TSC thanks industry stakeholders in advance for their contributions to this research. The research is expected to be completed by the end of the year. ♦



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Contact TIAIB on 1800 333 041, or visit www.TIAIB.com.au for a quote today, and please come and meet the TIAIB team at the VTA Conference. ♣

AUSTRALIA WIDE



Now taxi users only need one phone app to book a taxi anywhere in Australia.

The AWT App is currently being rolled out across Australia and is already active in Melbourne and Adelaide and many regional centres.

Other capital cities and regional areas are in the process of being activated.

The AWT App seamlessly integrates into the MT Data, Smart Move and Cabsat taxi dispatch systems and provides taxi services with full featured management console to

manage their app bookings.

The AWT App is currently available for the iPhone and the Android version is just weeks away. Visit www.awtaxi.com.au to find out more, or call 1800 067 010 to find out about activating the AWT App in your taxi district. ♣

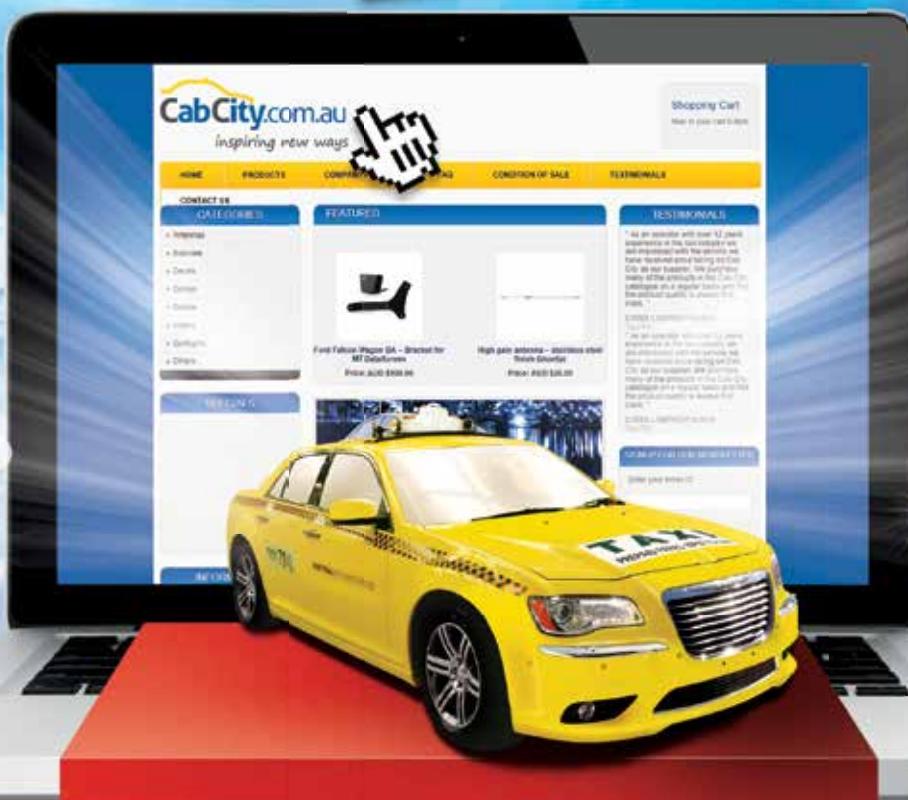


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Melbourne Star observation wheel

The Melbourne Star Observation Wheel, located in Melbourne's waterfront precinct of Docklands, opened in December 2013 and has fast become a popular and important first stop for visitors to the city and a fun new destination for locals.

At 120 metres high, equivalent to a 40-storey building, and with 21 fully-enclosed glass cabins that are heated in winter and air-conditioned in summer, the Melbourne Star offers guests a 30 minute flight that takes in views of up to 40 kilo-

metres, including the Docklands precinct, Melbourne's CBD, Port Phillip Bay, Mount Macedon and the Dandenong Ranges.

Guests also enjoy the Star's Tales of Melbourne, a striking and colourful range of interpretative story

panels in the pre-boarding area which detail informative and fun facts about Melbourne and Victoria, including its history and heritage, multiculturalism, innovations, and key attractions.

"The Melbourne Star is a fantastic introduction to Melbourne for newcomers and visitors to the city," Melbourne Star CEO Chris Kelly said.

"A flight on the Star is a great way for someone to get an understanding of the layout of the city and some of its key attractions as well as some regional drawcards."

The Observation Wheel's unique nightly LED lighting display, running from dusk until midnight, is also proving a big hit with visitors and locals alike.

Open daily from 10 am to 10 pm, with last admission at 9.30 pm. The Melbourne Star is located on Waterfront Way in Docklands and there's a taxi rank directly outside, on Peal River Road, opposite Medibank Icehouse. ♣

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BUILD: Medium

EYES: Brown

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COMPLEXION: Fair

Ebony Graham was allegedly involved in drug trafficking in Footscray. A warrant for her arrest has been issued for failing to appear at the Sunshine Magistrates' Court. Report information confidentially online at www.crimestoppers.com.au or phone Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000. ✪



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Melbourne Major Events CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER 2014

6 Sep		Korean Wave Festival - is a celebration of both traditional and modern Korea. Join invited guests from South Korea and party K-pop style with free live music. There's also food stalls along River Terrace with Korean delicacies on offer.	Federation Square Melbourne
13 Sep		Victorian State Schools Spectacular - More than 3000 students from over 200 schools from across Victoria will set the stage alight as they perform hits from Queen, Katy Perry, Lorde, Led Zeppelin, the Eurythmics and more.	Hisense Arena Melbourne Olympic Parks East Melbourne
14 Sep		Take 2 Markets - is Melbourne's longest running recycled fashion market. Expect to find Australian and international designers, High Street brands plus some cool vintage and retro gear. There will also be shoes, hats, sunnies, jewellery and more. All goods will be priced to sell.	Queen Victoria Market 'A Shed' corner of Peel Street and Victoria Streets Melbourne
17 Sep - 5 Oct		Melbourne Fringe Festival - includes a wide variety of art forms, including theatre, comedy, music, performance art, film, cabaret, digital art, and circus performance as well. Melbourne Fringe Festival has a "Hub" at the North Melbourne Town Hall, where the main Box Office, Festival Club and Fringe-run venues are located.	Venues throughout the city, from bars, clubs and independent theatres. Also Federation Square & Melbourne Museum.
20 Sep - 1 Oct		Royal Melbourne Show - Victoria's largest annual community event, bringing together the very best of entertainment, agriculture, attractions and fine food for a fun and memorable day out to enjoy with family and friends.	Melbourne Showgrounds Epsom Road Flemington
27 Sep		AFL Grand Final - This titanic contest is between two teams with one emerging as the premier side for the year. Close to 95,000 fans pack the stands of the MCG for the grand final while millions watch it worldwide on cable, satellite and free to air television.	MCG Brunton Avenue East Melbourne



Main Road CLOSURES

Street	Dates	Details	Purpose
Market Street Melbourne	Closed until further notice	Full time closure of the northbound carriageway between Flinders Lane and Collins St.	Road closure due to unsafe building
Arden and Langford Streets North Melbourne	12 September 2014; 9am-4pm (weekdays) 8am-5pm (Saturdays) 10am-5pm (Sundays)	Full closure at intersection. Partial closure of the Arden Street eastbound carriageway across Langford Street. Full closure of the Langford Street southbound carriageway between Green Street and Arden Street.	Water and sewer tapping works
Queens Bridge Street and Power Street Southbank	until 3 September 2014	Full closure of the Queens Bridge Street carriageway (both directions) between Flinders Street and City Road. Full closure of the Whiteman Street/Power Street carriageway (both directions) between Clarendon Street and City Road.	Tram track renewal works



For sheer fun, discovery and excitement, there's nothing like the worlds of the Royal Melbourne Show.

There are worlds of adventure to experience, including agricultural discoveries, epicurean wonders, blue ribbon all-stars, thrilling attractions and much more.

The stars of the Royal Melbourne Show are the thousands of magnificent animals and their handlers, along with other talented exhibitors

competing to win Best in Show and claim a coveted Royal Melbourne blue ribbon.

This year also marks the centenary year of Clydesdales at the Royal Melbourne Show. There's a world of agricultural discovery to be enjoyed, with hundreds of farm animals to see, cuddle and feed inside the popular Animal Nursery, including lambs, kids, piglets, ducklings and puppies.

This year there are even more epicurean wonders and delights to experience in the Tastes of Victoria Pavilion, where foodies can enjoy tasty food from three rotating pop-up restaurants – Estelle, Hammer

& Tong and Pho Nom.

Never seen before in Melbourne, The Rooftop Express live show will entertain visitors with its highly trained horses, cattle and dogs performing high-energy stunts with a comedic twist.

Australia's best FMX team, the Showtime Freestyle Moto X team, will 'wow' crowds with gravity-defying stunts, tricks and backflips on the Coca-Cola Arena.

There's also an amazing array of thrilling carnival rides, live entertainment and special appearances, nightly fireworks, showbags and much more to experience with family and friends. ♣

CityLink activated an upgraded system last month that will stop over-height trucks (greater than 4.65 metres) from entering the Burnley and Domain Tunnels.

Vehicles over the 4.65 metres legal height limit cause damage to the Burnley and Domain tunnels which, in turn, causes safety hazards, long traffic delays and damage to tunnel infrastructure.

These incidents risk the safety of other drivers due to falling debris and cause extensive delays while CityLink crews inspect and repair the damage.

CityLink has upgraded the detection system so that when an overheight truck almost certain to cause damage to the tunnel approaches, the system will automatically reduce speed limits and close lanes.

Red traffic lights will be activated, boom gates will be lowered and all drivers will be required to stop for a short time.

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This will give CityLink crews an opportunity to stop and isolate the offending truck before it causes damage.

CityLink understands this will be an inconvenience for drivers, but the short closure is preferable to the safety risks and extensive delays caused by overheight truck damage. ♣



world news

New York

Don't bet on the death of taxis just yet. Remember when everyone was proclaiming the death of newspapers? Now they're doing it to taxis.

Shares in Medallion Financial, which trades under the ticker TAXI, are down 20% for the year.

The company lends money to taxi drivers and fleet owners trying to buy expensive taxi licenses known as medallions. Medallion Financial's main market is New York, where medallions cost more than \$1 million apiece.

This isn't a story about rising gas prices or more people walking and biking to work. Rather, investors are betting on the taxi industry's slow death as services such as Uber and Lyft expand.

But don't write a taxi eulogy yet.

Medallion Financial reported earnings last month that were the highest in nearly a decade. At a time when everyone expects the company to take a hit, its margins are actually increasing.

"We think that the quarterly results demonstrated the disconnect that has emerged between the short thesis on the stock (ride sharing apps will hurt the taxicab industry, and TAXI has exposure) and Medallion's actual business model and earnings power," he wrote.

The medallions themselves aren't getting any less expensive. Uber launched in New York City in 2011. A fleet medallion has gone up nearly 40% since then. Lyft launched in the city two months ago, so time will tell its impact.

Larry Hall, Medallion's CFO, brushed off the threat from taxi apps -- some of which allow users to arrange for licensed cabs -- in a statement accompanying this quarter's earnings report.

"The taxi industry continues to retain its favoured position with the riding public against new market entrants such as ridesharing and car service apps through fast, safe and reliable service, insured vehicles, licensed drivers, and metered pricing that is consistent at all times of the day," he said.

Boston

A taxi driver was beaten in Arlington last month by one of two men who tried to get away with paying just \$2 of a \$20 fare — but they were quickly nabbed because they used a credit card.

The driver told police that the fare was \$20, but the passengers allegedly only paid \$2.

When the driver threatened to call the police, he said one of the men started punching him.

When he reached for his cell phone, one of the suspects allegedly grabbed it and threw it out the window of the cab.

Arlington Police Chief Frederick Ryan said the passenger almost made the arrests too easy for investigators: In addition to swiping his credit card in the cab, he left behind several other cards with his name on them in the back seat.

"I wish to commend the cab driver for coming forward and positively identifying his alleged assailants," Ryan said.

"The Arlington Police Department takes cases like this very seriously, and we are relieved that he was not badly hurt."

England

A new sculpture called 'London Taxi' by artist Benedict Radcliffe has been unveiled at Heathrow's Terminal 2: The Queen's Terminal.

The design uses cutting-edge computer programming technology to accurately translate the build specification of the London black cabs produced by The London Taxi Company.

Heathrow Terminal 2 Chief operating officer, Normand Bovin, says: "As the UK's only hub airport, we have a unique opportunity to showcase British talent to the world. I am delighted that we have chosen a London artist and given new talent a platform in front of 20 million passengers a year from more than 50 destinations."

London artist, Benedict Radcliffe, adds: "It's hard to think of a more instantly recognizable motor vehicle,



British or otherwise, than the FX4 Black Cab. I am incredibly proud to have been selected by Heathrow for a permanent display at Heathrow's Terminal 2, the opportunity to exhibit at the UK's hub airport has been a great honour for me."

The 'London Taxi' will bid farewell to 20 million passengers at T2 every year and is the central feature of the departure lounge, creating an opportunity for passengers to take one last glance of one of London's most photographed icons.

Justin Burns ♣

vale



Peter Norman Howard died peacefully on Sunday 20 July, 2014 aged 61.

Peter spent most of his adult life working in the taxi industry. He started as a driver then progressed, through hard work and dedication, to become a licence owner, and then a part owner of Vermont Autogas.

Peter had many interests. He raced cars at Winton, in his early days, and even had a stint in a 24 hour race at Bathurst. He was a loyal Melbourne supporter, played tennis, golf, snooker and was a member of a ten pin bowling team for many years.

Some of the readers will remember Peter from an Australian Taxi Conference in Alice where he won many bets, by walking up Uluru without stopping. Others will remember him for eating 14 desserts of chocolate mousse at the taxi conference in Hobart.

Peter was a member of Yellow Cab and Cranbourne Golf Club for many years. We will all remember him for being the honest golfer who came in with a score of 169 for 18 holes and for a score of 3 on the par 4 hardest hole at Cranbourne. We also could not understand how anybody could miss "golf day" because the Business Activity Statements were due at Vermont, but that was Peter.

Peter will be sorely missed but not forgotten, by all of us. ♣



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Flash Cab Australia released its new 2015 Toyota Tarago Flash Cab accessible vehicle 100% taxi compliant in Sydney last month. It is proving to be a big hit with the taxi industry and the general public.

Flash Cab's director, John Cooper, has been overseeing the release of the new 2015 Flash Cab and couldn't be happier with the attention the new model has received. John Cooper has over 40 years experience in the

motor trade and 23 years experience in the disability field and said, "We have always been innovators". Flash Cab Australia is at the forefront of accessible vehicle developments and has been for the last 22 years.

Flash Cab Australia is an Adelaide based company and has recently moved their whole operation to Adelaide with wheelchair conversions applied locally.

Radio Cabs Wagga has been successfully running two Flash Cab Caddy Maxi taxis and Horsham Taxis have taken delivery of a Flash Cab Caddy Maxi with new orders coming in every day.

The drive in this car is outstanding, smooth and quiet for all passengers and driver. Visibility for all passengers, including a wheelchair passenger, is much improved with the one piece panoramic side window. Another great feature is a simpler restraint system, which is also non removable, so they can't be stolen. A full size spare wheel is internally stored, and there are hidden storage spaces for the driver, built-in stowage for a baby capsule and non-carpeted rear floor for easy cleaning. Improved water sealing of the rear whisper quiet compartment, simpler rear seat folding and more passenger leg room. ♣

What colour's your next taxi?



The Taxi Services Commission (TSC) will exempt groups of metropolitan taxis from having to paint their taxis in Victorian Taxi Yellow, if they can demonstrate that they will offer passengers a competitive distinct service.

Brand new SILVER COLOUR Silver Top Silver Service Taxi and WHITE Dandenong Taxi were snapped recently at SilverComm while getting fitted out.

Interested operators of metropolitan taxis may apply for an exemption by writing to the TSC. Exemptions will be issued only to groups of five or more metropolitan taxis. Vehicles in an exempted group are to be coloured and branded in the same manner, and offer the same competitive distinct service.

The TSC reserves the right to revoke any exemption previously granted if, in the opinion of the TSC, any conditions of the granting have not been met.

For any taxi granted an exemption and painted in a colour other than Victorian Taxi Yellow, the checkered

green and yellow strip is optional.

All other standard decals are required as set out in the Specifications for Taxi-Cabs. This includes the decals being of the same dimensions as those currently fitted to taxis. ♣



Advertisers' Directory

Airport Taxi Rank Car Wash	36
Alex Taxis & Broker Pty Ltd	27
Blue Star Taxi's	19
CabCity.com.au	29
Cabt	31
Car Central	15
Flash Cab	36
Live TaxiEpay	7
Martin Meters	19
Melbourne City Toyota	13
Metro Club Inc	27
Punjab & Co Taxi Cover	39

QFM Disc Brake Pads	16
Rova Media	2
Schmidt Electronic Labs	17
Sprint Gas	14
Taxi 131008	28
Taxi Care Australia	9
The Taxi Man	36
TIAIB	28
Unigas	14
UTC Inc	11
Victoria Taxi Club	15
Yarra Finance	30



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