



Official journal of the Victorian Tax Association  
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**JUNE 2011**

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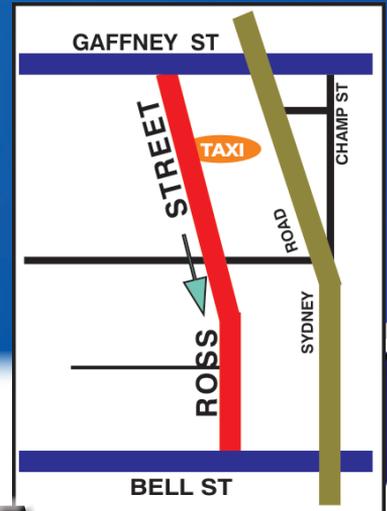
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It will come as no surprise that a great deal of the VTA staff effort has been absorbed by matters directly and indirectly related to the Taxi Industry Inquiry.

**U**nlike Government with its huge and seemingly bottomless supply of human and financial resources, the VTA is trying to work within its limited resources with the assistance of special public relations, legal, economic and regulatory consultancies.

To give you some idea, it is estimated that the Taxi Industry Inquiry which is scheduled to take a year to complete will cost the State at least \$2million by the time you add up the fees of Professor Fels, Dr Cousins, other consultants, highly paid support staff, office space, telecommunications, printing, travel and transport, advertising and

spin, and all the miscellaneous bibs and bobs.

Hmm, having thought more about it now, perhaps the cost to the State (that's all of us) could be very more than \$2million.

This estimated cost does not include the cost of the future Taxi Services Commission which will take over the role of the taxi regulator when the VTD is disbanded in 12 months or so.

Taxi industry stakeholders should not be surprised if at some point the VTA says that to continue the good fight for them more money is needed from them. Legal action in the Supreme, Federal and High Courts can be very very costly, if of course it ever gets that far.

The VTA was very pleased that

the formal terms of reference released in May include that the Inquiry will inquire into the Regulator (VTD and DOT).

As I said last month, because the VTD/DOT see themselves as a key and vital part of the taxi industry, they need to be inquired into in respect to their role, policies, practices, processes, compliance with legal mores and ethics, and biases.

Having said this, the VTA remains concerned that Inquiry support staff are being drawn from DOT/VTD staff who have over recent times been involved in taxi policy development, taxi accreditation and taxi compliance.

If the Inquiry is to be taken seriously as truly an "INDEPENDENT"

Inquiry, then these staff should not be part of an Inquiry into themselves.

As a rider to this, the VTA is not in any way questioning the professionalism and integrity of the actual people involved, but rather their position in the scheme of things at the time policies, processes, practices, and decisions were made and implemented. Likewise, the VTA is not suggesting that Professor Fels or Dr Cousins will be influenced by the views of support staff, but a perception risk exists.

On a brighter note, I had the pleasure last month of attending the state conference of The Nationals in Shepparton. Apart from the pleasant hospitality and interesting people, I had the opportunity of having time with the Deputy Premier, Peter Ryan, and the Minister for Local Government, Jeanette Powell.

Peter Ryan was very interested in matters related to the Taxi Inquiry, relationships with the Minister for Public Transport, the DOT and VTD, and taxi safety cameras, fares, and what outcomes the VTA would like to see from the Inquiry.

My discussion with Jeanette Powell was to do with ensuring that local government supported the already established people transport services offered by taxis before creating or expanding Council run or funded community transport services.

Finally, I urge taxi operators and drivers to be involved in the Taxi Inquiry, either directly or through the VTA's Operator and Driver Committees. See separate articles. ❀



**NEIL SACH**  
VTA CEO

An advertisement for KIA GRAND CARNIVAL Wheelchair Accessible Taxi conversion. The background is a light blue and green gradient with a faint grid pattern. On the left, the KIA logo is in a red oval, followed by the text "GRAND CARNIVAL" in large red letters and "Wheelchair Accessible Taxi" in blue. To the right is the "AUTOMOBILITY" logo, which is a blue outline of a car with a wheelchair icon inside, and the tagline "leaders in wheelchair access". In the center, a yellow KIA Grand Carnival taxi is shown from a rear three-quarter view, with its rear hatch open and a wheelchair ramp extended. A red starburst graphic on the left contains the text "HUGE \$\$ SAVINGS on New Car Purchases from KIA...Ask us how!". Below this, a list of bullet points describes the benefits of the conversion. On the right, a text box explains the conversion process. At the bottom, a blue banner contains the call to action: "Call now to schedule a free demonstration 1300 660 773 www.automobility.com.au".

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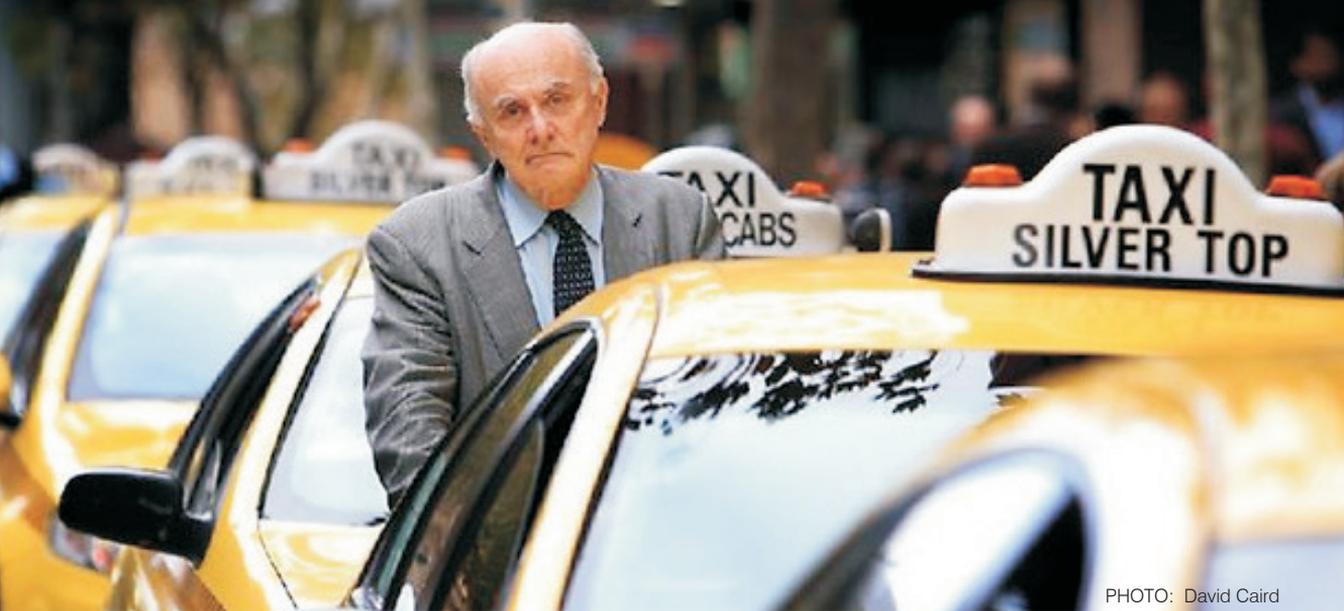


PHOTO: David Caird

# Taxi industry inquiry starts with background paper

A review of the taxi and hire car industry commenced on 12 May with the release of the first official background paper from the Taxi Industry Inquiry titled "Setting the Scene".

The background paper outlines a range of service, industry structure and regulatory problems that currently face the taxi and hire car industry, poses 100 questions for consideration by the inquiry and calls on the community and stakeholders to provide submissions on these issues.

"This is the start of the inquiry's broad engagement with the Victorian community. It is an early opportunity to let us know what the inquiry should examine by having your say on the matters raised in the paper," said Professor Allan Fels, Head of the Taxi Industry Inquiry.

The background paper, amongst other things:

- introduces an economic and market perspective on the provision of taxi services;
- provides high level results and themes from customer satisfaction survey data;
- looks at general complaints data;
- asks if the needs of people

with mobility challenges are being met;

- considers how taxis fit as a form of public transport in line with other transport modes such as buses;
- questions the effectiveness of the current taxi industry structure and Government regulatory measures;
- points to the role of improved working conditions, remuneration, and training of drivers in raising the standard of customer service; and
- highlights the use of hire car services for pre-booked trips

"The problems in the taxi and hire car industry are complex in nature and long standing. The government has given me a broad set of Terms of Reference to reflect this," said Professor Fels.

"We are inviting feedback and submissions on the matters discussed in this first paper "Setting the Scene", which provides an early opportunity for people to offer input on key areas the inquiry should examine."

"The community is at the forefront of this inquiry," he said.

"For this reason, the broad-reaching nature of "Setting the

Scene" is appropriate and necessary to enable a fulsome and frank analysis of the issues which the Inquiry is tasked to examine," he said.

"Identifying the difficult issues early on will help the Inquiry work out the interests and perspectives of various stakeholders, start the policy and engagement necessary to grapple with these issues, and will ultimately lead to the development of robust recommendations."

The paper is available from the Inquiry's website at [www.taxiindustryinquiry.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxiindustryinquiry.vic.gov.au) or by calling 9655 2000. Submissions close Friday, 24 June 2011.

## About the Taxi Industry Inquiry

The Taxi Industry Inquiry has been established to undertake a comprehensive investigation into all aspects of the Victorian taxi and hire cars industry. The inquiry will recommend a set of reforms to the Victorian Government focused on the achievement of better outcomes for the travelling public.

## Contact

[taxiindustryinquiry@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:taxiindustryinquiry@transport.vic.gov.au) ♣

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# Setting the scene



**DAVID SAMUEL**  
VTA Policy and Communications

**“This industry has a tremendous amount to be proud of and is a world leader in many areas.”**

The Taxi Inquiry has obviously been busy in its first month. This is reflected by the release of the discussion paper, *Setting the Scene*. The paper basically outlines the parameters of the Inquiry, and poses some of the questions they hope the Inquiry will be addressing.

The VTA will be providing a submission in response to the discussion paper. We hope to be able to work with various groups and industry stakeholders throughout this process so the industry is able to present a unified voice on the key issues.

Some of the areas the response will focus on include topics such as, deregulation, competition, service delivery and safety – for both drivers and passengers. We look forward to sharing our views on these topics with both the Inquiry and our industry.

One point we would like to emphasise is industry pride. Don't believe all the hype. This industry has a tremendous amount to be proud of and is a world leader in many areas. As an industry we acknowledge, only too often, that there are problems that need to be fixed. Unfortunately, others are not so quick to take responsibility for the mistakes they make that reflect poorly on our industry.

When an Inquiry like this is called there is naturally a lot of public and political comment; some of it productive and some of it not so. At the end of the day we all know that the media and politicians will focus on the less positive aspects of our industry and the service we provide. We must work with the Inquiry to identify the legitimate concerns and issues and address them.

With regards to the inquiry more broadly, the VTA remain concerned with the apparent influence the Department of Transport are exerting over it. We are also concerned about the amount of anecdotal commentary that is occurring in public forums that reflects poorly on an industry that appears, through empirical evidence at least, to be doing a good job.

Despite this, we continue to support the aims of the Inquiry and are committed to working with it. After all, it is the industry that has been calling for reform for years now. Finally, we urge all industry stakeholders to participate - there is no point in complaining after the event. ♣

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# Mohammad orders Dh26m payment to owners

DUBAI: In his capacity as the Ruler of Dubai, His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE, has ordered the payment of Dh26.372 million (AUS\$6.8 million) to Emiratis whose 6,593 taxi number plates are operated by the Dubai Taxi Corporation and taxi franchise companies at the Dubai Roads and Transport Authority (RTA).

The RTA's Public Transport Agency will start distribution of the bonus to the entitled beneficiaries over and above their annual financial dues.

Mattar Al Tayer, Chairman of the Board and Executive Director of the RTA, thanked Shaikh Mohammad for rewarding the taxi plate holders with limited income, and enabling them to better cope with the requirements of life and earn a decent living for their families.

"These bonuses are part of many other generous gestures from Shaikh Mohammad. They are true



testament to the support accorded by Shaikh Mohammad to his people to better their living conditions, particularly those with limited incomes. It further illustrates his keenness to provide good living conditions to all members of the community," Al Tayer said. ❖

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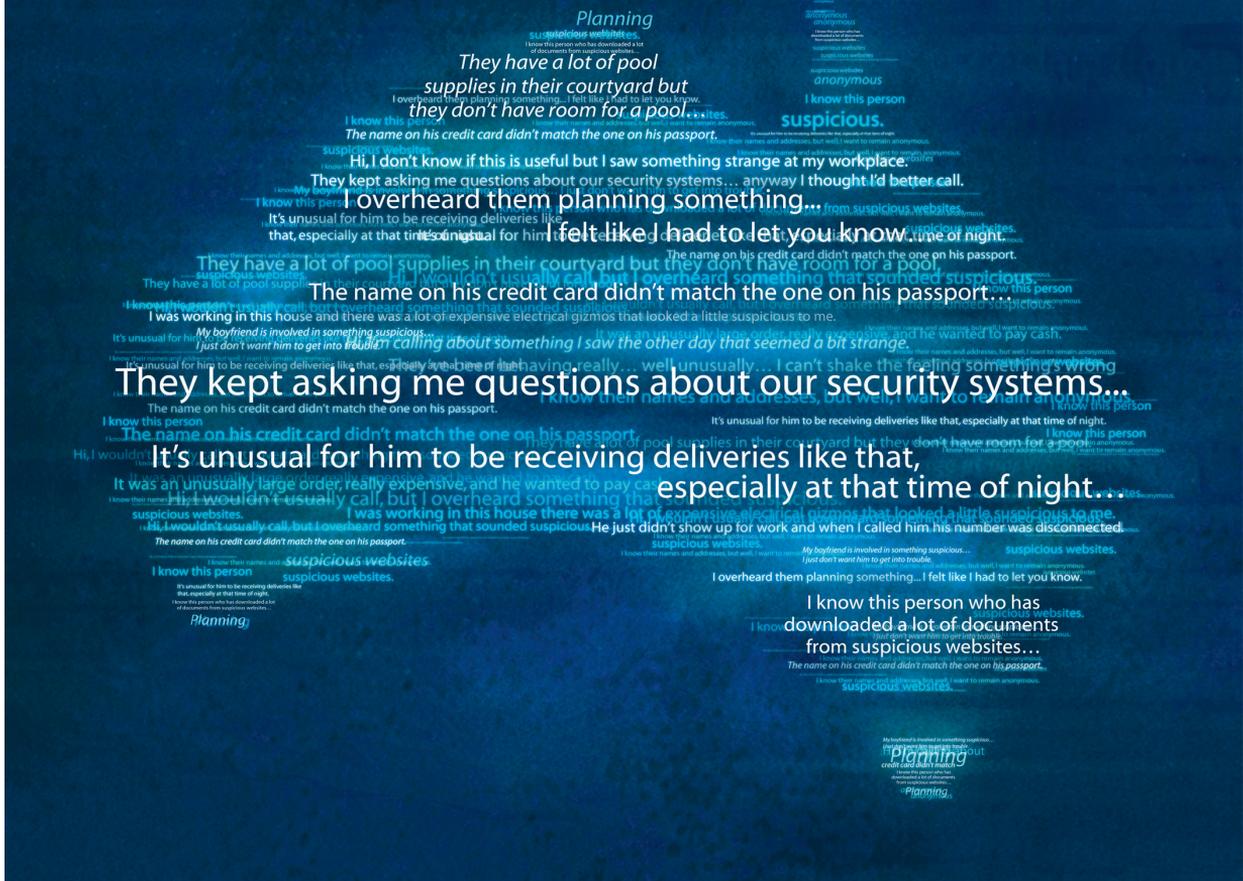
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# Looking forward

I trust all taxi industry participants have taken advantage of a great opportunity to provide feedback on the future direction of the industry by making a submission to the Taxi Industry Inquiry.

As I mentioned in my previous editorial, following completion of the inquiry, a Taxi Services Commission will be formed which will have responsibility for regulating taxis and hire cars. The Victorian Taxi Directorate (VTD) will at a point in time, transition to this Commission.

Until that time, the VTD will continue to operate as normal and there are no changes to the obligations and responsibilities of taxi and hire car participants.

In particular, the VTD will focus on a number of priorities during the 2011/12 year to ensure the taxi, hire vehicle and driving instructor deliver safe, sustainable, reliable and accessible services.

Safety of drivers and passengers will continue to be high on our agenda. This will include reinforcing the use of safety tools/initiatives such as safety cameras, driver protection screens and prepaid fares.

We also are committed to ensuring taxi passengers have access to timely and efficient services. This includes identifying and penalising wheelchair accessible taxi drivers who chose to breach their driver accreditation conditions.

We will continue to make operators and Network Service Providers accountable through various compliance and audit initiatives. Compliance with Regulations and Business & Service Standards will continue to be scrutinised.

We want the best people in our industry. To that end we will look at ways how Accreditation and Licensing can be optimised to en-

sure we can remove rogue participants from the industry.

Last, but not least, we are committed to maintaining frequent and timely communication with the industry. As a case in point, the newly established Taxi Fleet Forum, Taxi Operator Forum and Taxi Driver Forum will provide an opportunity for various industry stakeholder groups to provide feedback on issues that matter to them.

I should note that while these will guide us in the year ahead, they will not preclude the VTD from undertaking a range of other activities in line with its regulatory capacity.

## Prepaid fares labels

Prepaid fares is a driver safety initiative introduced to reduce fare evasion and the associated conflict between drivers and passengers, particularly during the late night and early morning hours.

Prepaid fares labels play an important role in informing taxi passengers about the requirement to prepay their fares when travelling between 10pm and 5am.

The VTD has written to Network Service Providers, licence holders and taxi operators, formalising the requirement under regulation 23 (1) (a) & (b) of the Transport (Taxi-Cabs) Regulations 2005 for all taxis across Victoria to display two external and up to two internal prepaid labels at all times from 1 August 2011.

It will be an offence under the regulations for taxis not to display the external and internal prepaid labels from that date.

Licence holders and operators will be able to pick up an initial supply of prepaid labels from their affiliated Network Service Providers. A limited number of labels may



**PETER CORCORAN**  
General Manager  
Victorian Taxi Directorate

also be picked up from the VTD head office (Level 23, 80 Collins St, Melbourne) and the Taxi Inspection Centre at Melbourne Airport.

Licence holders and operators seeking to obtain replacement external prepaid fare labels will need to source them in the same manner as other taxi livery decals. Replacement prepaid internal labels can continue to be collected from the VTD.

Information relating to the positioning and appearance of the labels, as well as label manufacturing specifications, can be viewed on the VTD website (at [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au)).

I would like to take this opportunity to strongly urge drivers to always ask passengers to prepay their taxi fare when travelling during the late evening and early morning hours.

Displaying prepaid fares stickers will be compulsory after 1 August 2011.

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# Tough Budget betrays regional Victorians

Victorians are the losers in today's Federal Budget with no new federal funding slated for Victorian roads and public transport.

RACV General Manager Public Policy Brian Negus said the lack of federal funding would increase frustration and congestion on Victoria's already choked roads and public transport as vital projects will be delayed.

"Despite being the engine-room for jobs growth and efficiency gains, Victoria has been short-changed by the Federal Government which has not recognised the contribution of Victoria's growth to the national economy," Mr Negus said.

"This lack of funding will put the brakes on a number of critical projects in Victoria and RACV is disappointed the Federal Government has failed to deliver those necessary funds.

"Congestion on our roads is causing enormous frustration to Victorian road users and crippling the state."

Mr Negus said the Federal Government had already committed funds to the Regional Rail Link (\$500 million) but the deferral of this project along with vital works on the Princes Highway East from Traralgon to Sale (\$20 million) was disappointing.

The Budget re-announced the same funding for road projects under the Federal National Building program including extending the Geelong Ring Road over the existing Princes Highway (\$62.5 million), the West Gate Bridge strengthening (\$120 million), works on the Western Highway at Anthony's Cutting (\$160 million), widening of Clyde Road in Berwick (\$30 million) and works on Nagambie bypass (\$177.6 million).

"RACV supports these projects but is disappointed that most of these works had already been committed and no new projects are included in the Budget.

"There is also no further funding commitment to the Western Highway duplication from Ballarat to Stawell which is the critical link between Adelaide and Melbourne and carries significant freight traffic. The Princes Highway West duplication from Winchelsea to Colac also received no funding and these two projects had previously been committed for future funding.

"This is clearly a betrayal of regional Victorians particularly those in the west of the state."

Mr Negus said the Federal Budget had failed to address construction of Victoria's critical city-shaping projects including:

- The East/West link from Eastern Freeway to the Western Ring Road with tunnels to Citylink and under the Maribynong River
- The North-East link from the Metropolitan Ring Road at Greensborough to the Eastern Freeway and Eastlink
- Improvements to the metropolitan rail system through the Metro Rail Tunnel from Footscray Station to Caulfield Station
- The Shepparton Bypass.

"The Federal Government with this Budget has missed an opportunity to commit to new transport infrastructure which will leverage huge economic benefits to the state, and the nation," he said.

"The Federal Treasurer has stated that this Budget was designed to build up vital economic capacity and enable Victoria to grow sustainably. In our view, the budget has missed the mark and does not deliver adequately on these priorities."

Mr Negus said road congestion costs Victorians \$3 billion a year and is predicted to rise to a massive \$6 billion by 2020. ♣



**BRIAN NEGUS**  
RACV General Manager  
Public Policy

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# Operator & Driver input



In response to the release of the Taxi Inquiry discussion paper Setting the Scene, the VTA has established Operator and Driver Taxi Inquiry Committees to better provide an industry wide response to the discussion paper.

If you are an industry participant and interested in participating in these committees please send an email to [clients@victaxi.com.au](mailto:clients@victaxi.com.au) or call 9676 2635. ❀



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# Taxi Camera Expo Update

At the time of preparing this article there is still only one VTD approved taxi safety camera (2009 specifications) so the VTA sees no point in holding an expo where operators wishing to view first hand all available products on the market would be able to do so.

This is very unfortunate as the VTA was hoping that more products would have been approved by this time. Our concern was voiced in writing to the Minister asking that the 1 July 2011 be moved out. Unfortunately the Minister was not inclined to agree to the VTA's reasonable request, but we haven't given up yet .

From the VTA's perspective it seems unreasonable to mandate new safety cameras by 1 July 2011 (metropolitan, outer suburban and urban) when only one product has been approved as this gives the only approved seller a distinct market advantage.

The 1 July deadline is particularly relevant to Ballarat and Bendigo taxis, where cameras have not been previously mandated or permitted. It has been suggested that



some Ballarat and Bendigo operators are considering non-compliance until competition exists.

Not unexpectedly the VTD has reacted in the way they know best by threatening to undertake blitzes and impose fines.

If a standoff does come about, don't be surprised if operators take their taxis off the road. These operators and the drivers will be losers, but the biggest losers will be the communities they normally

service.

The VTA has also made the point on many occasions and again to the Minister that the cost of installing new safety cameras is not captured in the current fare setting model, despite the VTD saying it is.

Should more cameras be approved, the VTA will revisit the possibility of running a taxi safety camera expo. ♣

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# PARKROYAL launches at Melbourne Airport

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The new format Australian Taxi Conference was held in Hobart early last month. Based on delegate feedback it can be said that the conference was a great success.

**T**he conference was opened by Tasmania's Minister for Sustainable Transport and Alternative Energy, the Hon Nick McKim. Interestingly, Nick is the first Green in Australia to be appointed as a Minister.

To get things off to a bright start, Robyn Moore got us all involved in "the power of the word". Her presentation was fun and laughter, but contained serious messages about how each of us can develop our minds and thoughts to achieve that little bit more in our lives, relationships and businesses.

Key elements of the conference related to taxi regulation and operation, driver availability, and LPG.

### Taxi Regulation and Operation

Matthews Daus, president of the International Association of Transport Regulators and former Commissioner of the New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission, spoke in support of taxi licence regulation and why regulation is good for the government, industry and customers. Matt (a lawyer) is also Counsel of Windels Marx Lane & Mittendorf where he heads up the firm's Transportation Practice Group. Robert Mc-

Bride, president of the US based Taxicab, Limousine & Paratransit Association (TLPA), spoke about his experiences of operating taxis in New York City and in his new home city of Denver, Colorado.

David Hope, director of passenger transport policy with the Tasmanian Government, updated the conference on the current status of the Tasmanian taxi industry.

Michael Sutton, General Manager of the land transport reform branch of the federal department of infrastructure and transport, gave an update on the Disability Standards for accessible public transport and where these are heading into the future.

Barry Whyte represented the New Zealand Taxi Federation giving an update on some aspects of change occurring in New Zealand and how the Christchurch earthquake has impacted on our NZ colleagues. Comment was made about business activity with NZ affectively in recession.

Gerard Reardon, associate director, of transport consultants McCormick Rankin Cagney, spoke on the work done for the ATIA to develop model specifications for taxi ranks.



**BERNARD SALT**  
KPMG Partner



## Driver Availability

Bernard Salt, Partner, Property & Demographic Advisory, KPMG, painted a sorry picture of the future of labour supply in Australia and the severe impact of restricting migration. Bernard's analysis of the past and the likely future predicts that even if some restrictions on migration are reversed, the taxi industry

across Australia is in for an ongoing shortage of labour.

David Samuel, executive officer policy and communications with the VTA, spoke about the difficulty in attracting people into the taxi industry as drivers, and the barriers put in the way by taxi regulators who seek to project the unrealistic expectations of the community.

Simone Reinertsen, senior workforce development consultant with the Transport Logistics Industry Skills Council, spoke on the workplace English and literacy needs and opportunities for taxi drivers and other new entrants.

## Keynote Address

The keynote address was delivered by the well known and regarded Professor Neville Norman, senior lecturer, economics, Melbourne University.

His speech was entitled "Opportunities and threats in uncertain times – the economic outlook for the Australian taxi industry".



**PROF NEVILLE NORMAN**  
Melbourne University Lecturer

## LP GAS

Michael Carmody, CEO LPG Australia, spoke on the Federal Government's plan to introduce excise on LPG. He pointed out the excise was to commence on 1 July 2011 but this pushed out to 1 December 2011. The concern now is not just the proposed excise but the added complication of a Carbon Tax.

Nic Moulis, general manager, ACAPMA, explained what is meant by Peak Oil and how it will impact on energy production and use, and the impact on the economy.

## Products and Technology

All conference exhibitors were offered a spot to speak to the delegates about their products and services.

Most did. Also, Swan Taxis (Perth) gave an explanation of their new innovative smart-phone taxi booking app.

In summary, the ATIA's 2011 Australia Taxi Conference was an outstanding event for delegates and their partners. ♣



# ACT Taxis demand fare parking

**CANBERRA** cab drivers want the power to slap parking fines on motorists who misuse taxi ranks.

The practice of illegally parking in designated cab zones has become so rife across Canberra that taxi operators have pleaded with the ACT Government to either provide after-hours parking inspectors or give the taxi association the power to issue tickets.

Canberra Taxi Industry Association chairman John McKeogh said the selfish behaviour blocked access to fares and deprived the already battling drivers of their livelihood.

While the Office of Regulatory Services declined the demand, it acknowledged the ongoing issue in a statement issued to the Sunday Canberra Times and promised action.

"The Office of Regulatory Services will arrange a meeting with ACT Policing and other relevant areas of ACT Government, to develop a strategy to address this matter,"



the statement said.

Mr McKeogh said ranks outside Canberra Casino, the Jolimont Centre and the Hyperdome were the worst affected.

"The trouble with the ranks is at

night and on the weekend, people just park wherever they want, it virtually cancels out taxis parking there at all." Mr McKeogh said.

"People know they're not going to get booked, cabbies try to talk to them and they just give us the bird.

"We've raised it with the Government and they say they'll help when they can, but they're not out there at night.

"Police sometimes book cars but they're busy late at night when the parking inspectors aren't working."

A Department of Justice and Community Safety spokeswoman said inspectors patrol cab ranks during business hours and peak periods.

"The Office of Regulatory Services generally patrols this area during business hours and peak times," she said.

"Infringement notices are issued in relation to those vehicles that are detected parking illegally in taxi ranks."

Michael Inman ❖



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# Help us say **STOP**

The Federal Government wants to tax LPG - a cleaner, greener alternative fuel that taxis (and most others in Australia) run on. If this happens, the cost of taxi travel for you and your family will increase significantly.

The Australian taxi industry uses LPG because it delivers lower running costs than petrol or diesel and it produces up to 13% less harmful carbon emissions into our environment.

Please help us with our non-political campaign. If you do not want to see a tax brought in that will cause taxi fares to increase and the collapse of the LPG industry in this State, please sign our petition.

By signing this petition (below) you will send a message to the Prime Minister and her Cabinet colleagues that you don't support a new and unnecessary tax on this cleaner and greener fuel, LPG.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this petition:-

- please simply print your name and add your signature
- including your address is optional

The taxi industry knows that the views of our drivers and passengers do count and they will make an impact in Canberra.

We appreciate your support. If you would like further information about LPG or this campaign, please log onto [www.lpgaustrali.com.au](http://www.lpgaustrali.com.au).

Please forward completed signed petitions to your taxi network or your operator. You can also send them directly to the VTA. office.

**JOHN BOWE**  
President

Australian Taxi Industry Association ♣



## TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



### **This petition of the citizens of Australia draws to the attention of the House:**

Our collective concerns over the Government's plans to impose a tax that will negatively impact on our ability to afford or to readily access the greener, cleaner alternative fuel LPG.

We are passengers of taxis that are powered by the green transition fuel. We are motorists who have converted to LPG. We are small business owners who rely on LPG.

We feel we should be rewarded for our choice to opt for a fuel that is up to 40% cheaper at the bowser and emits up to 13% less harmful carbon emissions than petrol or diesel-powered cars. Instead, this tax will punish us. It will put price pressures on taxis with the cost increases eventually passed onto us - the consumer. As motorists, it will stop us from being able to afford this cleaner, greener fuel alternative.

#### **We therefore ask the House to:**

Please reject any moves to impose an excise on LPG. Please do not support the legislation known now as the 'Taxation of Alternative Fuels.'

Name	Signature	Address (optional)
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

# TOP 10 DRIVER SAFETY TIPS

from the Victorian Taxi Directorate Transport Safety Officers

1. Ensure you have had enough sleep/rest and are not fatigued.
2. Complete a full vehicle inspection before starting each shift. Check the tyres, seat belts, headlights, brake lights, air bag system, brakes etc.
3. Always ensure that you are logged on to the despatch system while you are driving. This will enable you to activate your GPS and enable your depot, or emergency services, to locate you in an emergency.
4. Do not place your personal belongings in the console. Do not leave valuables such as your wallet cash or mobile phone where it can be seen. Hide these items.
5. Do not keep a large amount of money in the vehicle.
6. Ensure you check the taxi's safety camera is operating (green light flashing) at the start and throughout your shift. If the camera system shows a red light, the taxi must be withdrawn from service.
7. If an incident occurs such as fare evasion or damage to the taxi do not get out of the vehicle. Drive to the nearest police station and report the incident. Advise police immediately if an incident occurs
8. Have a driver protection screen installed into your vehicle at all times, not just at night.
9. Don't refuse any fares. If you are going to change-over, either switch off your dome light or use a destination board. Refusing fares may anger some customers. Always ask for prepaid fares after 10pm.
10. Be courteous to passengers. Don't be afraid to ask questions to clarify destinations, directions and fare confusion. ♣

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# A history of the New York cab

The classic New York taxi is to be phased out and replaced with a Japanese minivan. Here is a history of the New York taxi cab.



In 1967, New York City ordered all “medallion taxis” be painted yellow to help cut down on unofficial drivers and make official taxicabs more readily recognisable.

**T**he first taxicab company in New York City was the Electric Carriage and Wagon Company, which began running 12 electric hansom cabs in July 1897.

The company then built the Electrobat electric car, and had up to 100 taxicabs running in total by 1899. But in 1907 a fire destroyed 300 of the company’s vehicles causing it to shut down. Horsedrawn cabs once again became a primary means of transport around New York City.

The same year, Harry N. Allen imported 65 gasoline-powered cars from France and began the New York Taxicab Company. The cabs were originally painted red and green, but Allen repainted them all yellow to be visible from a distance. By 1908 the New York Taxicab Company was running 700 taxicabs.

Within a decade several more companies opened business and taxicabs began to proliferate. The fare was 50 cents a mile, a rate only affordable to the relatively wealthy.

By the 1920s, industrialists recognised the potential of the taxicab market. Automobile manufacturers like General Motors and the Ford Motor Company began operating fleets. The most successful manufacturer, however, was the Checker Cab Manufacturing Company.

Founded by Morris Markin, Checker Cabs produced the large yellow and black taxis that became one of the most recognisable symbols of mid-20th century urban life.

In 1937 Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia signed the Haas Act, which introduced official taxi licenses and the medallion system that remains in place today. The law limited the number of licenses to 16,900. The medallions are now worth hundreds of thousands of dollars with fleet medallions topping \$600,000 in 2007.

In 1967, New York City ordered all “medallion taxis” be painted yellow to help cut down on unofficial drivers and make official taxicabs more readily recognisable.

By the mid-1980s and into the 1990s the demographic changes among cabbies began to accelerate as new waves of immigrants arrived in New York. According to the 2000 US Census, of the 62,000 cabbies in New York 82 per cent are foreign born: 23 per cent are from the Caribbean (the Dominican Republic and Haiti), and 30 per cent from South Asia, and Pakistan.

In 1996, when Chevrolet stopped making the Caprice, the Ford Crown Victoria became the most widely used sedan for yellow cabs in New York. In addition, yellow cab operators also use the Honda Odyssey,

Isuzu Oasis, Chevrolet Venture, Ford Freestar, and Toyota Sienna minivans which offer increased passenger room. The distinctive Checker cabs were, due to their durable construction, phased out slowly, the last one being retired in July 1999, being over 20 years in service and nearly one million miles on its odometer. Laws since 1996 require taxis be replaced every 6 years regardless of condition.

In 2005, New York introduced incentives to replace its current yellow cabs with electric hybrid vehicles such as the Toyota Prius and Ford Escape Hybrid. As of February 2011, New York City had around 4,300 hybrid taxis, representing almost 33 per cent of New York's 13,237 taxis in service, the most in any city in North America.



New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has announced the Nissan design as the winner to replace the city's 13,000 yellow cabs, to be phased in over five years starting in 2013.

"Nissan is proud to provide the next generation of taxis for the City of New York," commented Nissan Americas Chairman Carlos Tavares.

"The NV200 taxi will give Nissan the opportunity to showcase our dedication to vehicle quality and urban mobility to more than 600 000 passengers every day," he added.

The NV200 taxi will be produced and assembled at Nissan's facility in Cuernavaca, Mexico. A very good idea, because it will be much cheaper than building in the US. However, the NV200 taxi will be a tuned version of the compact commercial vehicle currently available in global markets including the UK.

The program will also include working with the City and taxi owners on a pilot training to study the use of zero-emission, electric vehicles as taxis. The manufacturer will also provide up to six electric Nissan LEAFs to taxi owners for testing in 2012.

"The city's Taxi of Tomorrow is the Nissan NV 200 – and it's going to be the safest, most comfortable and most convenient cab the city has ever had," said Mayor Bloomberg.

"We started this process to leverage our taxi industry's purchasing power to get the highest quality taxi, one that can expand and redefine the legendary image of New York City taxicabs. The new taxis will be custom-designed to meet the specific demands of carrying 600,000 passengers a day in New York City traffic and the vehicle meets the top priorities identified by the public in our on-line survey," he added. ♣



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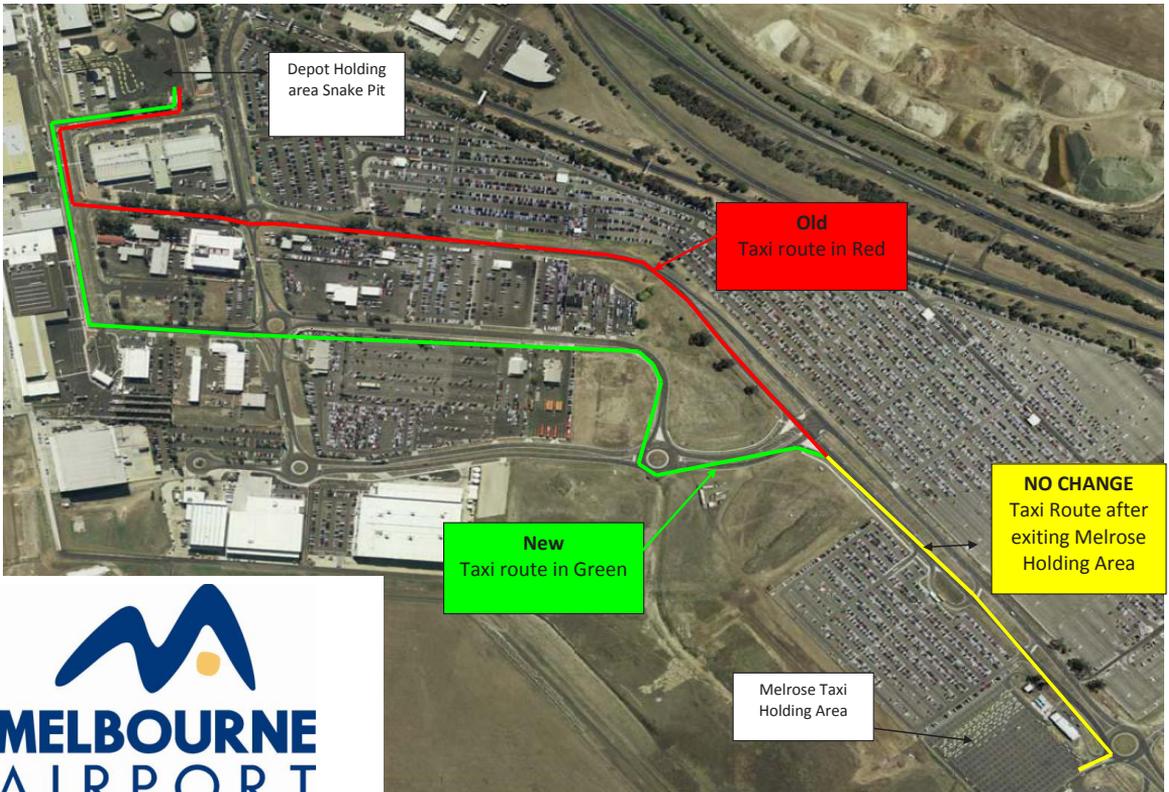


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# Airport taxi route altered

The route for taxis to access the Second Staging Area (snake Pit) from the Melrose Drive Holding Area has changed as indicated below. Directional signage has been installed to assist drivers. ♣



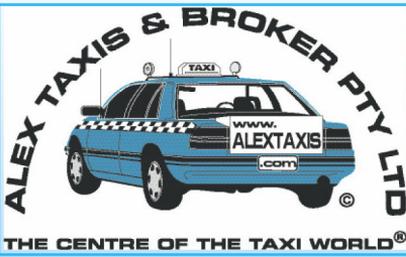
## Winter, wine and wildlife

Winter is a beautiful time of year at Healesville Sanctuary and the Queen's Birthday long weekend (11-13 June) is the perfect time to indulge in the very best the Yarra Valley has to offer. The best part about that? You don't need to go anywhere else - you'll find it all at Healesville Sanctuary!

The popular Winter, Wine and Wildlife weekend combines the Sanctuary's amazing wildlife experience with sensational food and wines from the Yarra Valley region.

Magic Moments offer a range of close-up animal experiences, are available every day and are fantastic value at just \$10 per person or \$30 for a family of four. Pre-book before you visit on 1300 ZOOS VIC or buy at Admissions, subject to availability on the day. ♣





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# Victorian Taxi Golf Association

## METROPOLITAN DAY

The Growling Frog Golf Course was the venue for this year's event which was a very successful day and major winners were:

A Grade Net	I. Lamb
A Grade Gross	P. Demiri
B Grade Net	C. Cauchi
B Grade Gross	G. Bos
C. Grade Net	J. Herbert
C Grade Gross	K. Jones
D Grade Net	N. Haikalis
D Grade Gross	D. Mann
Sponsors	C. Campbell

## PENNANT

Three rounds have been played and the ladder stands as follows:

Yellows	8 pts	25%
Ballarat	8	25
West Sub. Taxis	8	20
Peninsula	8	19
Geelong	8	18
Silvers	4	27
North Sub. Taxis	4	12
Dandenong	0	14
Black Cabs	0	12

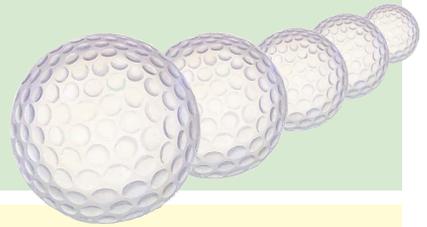
As can be seen, the competition is very even.

## GENERAL

Entries for the Nationals to be held at the Wanneroo Golf Club, Perth in October 2011 are now available with a closing date of 31st July 2011.

The Taxi Golf Association acknowledges the generous support provided by our sponsors – Silver Top Taxis, Victorian Taxi Association, Dandenong Taxis and Phonecabs.

Until next time - good golfing, **VTGA SECRETARY** ♣



# Yellow Cabs Golf Club

Sorry for missing last month's edition, I just ran out of time but we are back. With good news on the home front that our numbers on Tuesdays are not bad considering we seem to have at least two members always overseas all the time. And until last week the weather has been great to play golf. The course is in brilliant condition except of course a couple of bunkers. The ground staff are working hard to get it ready for the division one finals of pennant which happens to coincide with Yellows hosting round four of Taxi pennant season.

We seem to be jinxed at Cranbourne by some strange twist of fate something always goes amiss. Two years ago we were

nearly fogged out, another year because of rain and delays the greens were sanded the day before we played. Last year there was a power failure and the kitchen had to throw all the stock out of the freezers. We just can't win and this year of course it rained most of last week and the weekend, so we could not have any carts on the course. Our numbers were down to 47 players. Some clubs had to forfeit games, which is a disappointment to everybody. We had the bye and the great news was that Blacks have knocked Ballarat off.

So that leaves Peninsula one game clear on top but still with the bye to come. Looking at the fixture

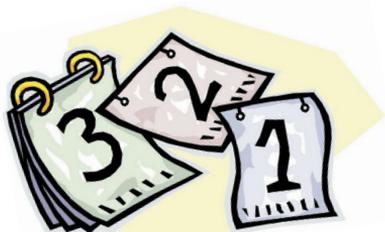
the teams around us still have the bye to come. As long as we keep winning, fingers crossed, we can have another crack at winning the pennant shield.

We have been given the entry forms for this year Oz Champs in Perth for mid October. At this stage it looks like Yellows will have about ten players going across the Nullarbor for championships. As you are sitting reading and having coffee thinking what you should be doing next, think about a game of golf at Cranbourne, we don't tee off until 11:30 am, none of that early morning freezing tee off times.

So until hopefully next month, if I don't forget with the results from Werribee and Cranbourne.

Happy Hooking,

**HACKER** ♣



# CALENDAR

## Taxi Operator Training Courses

all courses are held at the Victorian Taxi Association offices

Course No.	Day	Date	Course No.	Day	Date
195	1	Mon 6 June	197	1	Mon 18 July
	2	Tues 7 June		2	Tues 19 July
	3	Wed 8 June		3	Wed 20 July
196	1	Mon 27 June			
	2	Tues 28 June			
	3	Wed 29 June			

**Suite 2, 85 Salmon Street, Port Melbourne**

Note - Dates are subject to change. For further information contact: TITV: 9676 2635  
via email: [admin@victaxi.com.au](mailto:admin@victaxi.com.au) website: [www.victaxi.com.au](http://www.victaxi.com.au)

## You'd be hopping mad not to go to Healesville Sanctuary



Hop down to Healesville Sanctuary for better fun, better food and a better backyard to explore.

Visitors will experience the new Kangaroo exhibit, which includes new fences, entry point and pathways.

The exhibition will also include three new play items with a kan-

garoo theme. These are in-ground pogo sticks, a hop-scotch activity and a long jump where kids can measure their jump distance. The jumping pillow, a big favourite with both little and big kids, is also available and located in front of Sanctuary Harvest, which is run by Healesville Hotel. ♣

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## Harry Potter epic finale

@ IMAX Melbourne Museum, Carlton Gardens

IMAX Melbourne Museum is excited to announce that tickets to the first week of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 in IMAX 3D at IMAX are on sale now!

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2 will be presented in IMAX 3D and will open with a special screening at midnight, Tuesday 12 July.

In part two of the epic finale, the battle between the good and evil forces of the wizarding world escalates into an all-out war. The stakes have never been higher and no one is safe. But it is Harry Potter who may be called upon to make the ultimate sacrifice as he draws closer to the climactic showdown with Lord Voldemort. ♣

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# Taxi safety cameras in Ballarat and Bendigo

Effective 1 July 2011, all taxis operating in the Ballarat and Bendigo taxi-cab zones must be fitted with a VTD-approved safety camera system.

Requirements to install safety cameras have been designed to provide enhanced safety for the travelling public and for taxi drivers.

Taxi operators and network service providers have safety obligations to taxi drivers and their passengers, not only from a workplace safety perspective, but also under the business and service standards of their taxi industry accreditation.

VTD Transport Safety Officers will be enforcing this requirement through their monitoring and compliance activities.

Operators of taxis which do not have an installed and working VTD approved taxi safety camera are liable to a \$597 fine and the vehicle will be unable to be operated until the taxi licence conditions are complied with.

For more information, visit the VTD website (at [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au)).



**All taxis in Ballarat and Bendigo must have a taxi safety camera installed from 1 July 2011. ❖**

## SAFETY CAMERA OPERATING



- You will be photographed in the interests of driver and passenger safety.
- Photographs may be used by Police and other authorities for investigating unlawful activity and acting on complaints.
- Photographs are only permitted to be accessed by authorised persons.
- Conversations may be recorded if the emergency warning device in this taxi is operated.
- By hiring this taxi you give your consent to being photographed in this vehicle.

DOT5590\_F35\_01/11

Authorised by the Victorian Taxi Directorate October 2010 – Telephone: 1800 638 802

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### NORTH CAROLINA: King Cab files complaint over being ousted from vying for airport contracts after owners' felony convictions were made known.



The owners of King Cab, which was once in line for a lucrative airport contract, are asking a state judge to stop the city from awarding the contracts to three other companies.

King Cab had been recommended last fall by aviation director Jerry Orr for one of three airport contracts. But WCNC-TV and the Observer reported that two of three owners of King Cab had felony convictions from 2006, stemming from a plan to secure fraudulent driver's licenses.

That prompted City Manager Curt Walton to intervene in March and award King Cab's slot to a different company, City Cab. Walton said at the time that selecting King "would not be in the city's and the public's best interests." The City Council is scheduled to vote on awarding the three contracts next month. In addition to City Cab, the council will be asked to give contracts to Crown Cab and Taxi USA.

There are currently a dozen taxi companies operating at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport. Orr wants

to improve customer service, and said reducing the number of companies would help the airport identify who is at fault if a customer complains.

Orr said he wasn't aware of the convictions, and that the selection committee relied on the companies being vetted by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Passenger Vehicle for Hire Board.

Javed Kashmary served almost three months in federal prison for "transaction structuring," a crime associated with soliciting 40 fake driver's licenses. Naheed Kashmary served 14 months in federal prison for fraud, and is on probation until 2012. People with felony convictions can't hold driver permits with the city. They are allowed to have owner permits, however. Steve Harrison ♣



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ATC0910

# The Amazing



# Trivia Quiz!

## C'mon, test your general knowledge

1. Which US space shuttle has gone on its final mission?
2. Which team won the 2011 FA Cup?
3. Who was the first prime minister of Australia?
4. What popular entertainer has sold more records in more languages than any other singer in history?
5. What's the Australian Netball team called?
6. What animal is the source of the most widely consumed red meat in the world?
7. What musical instrument represents the cuckoo in Camille Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals?
8. What name did George Eastman register in 1888 because it was easy to memorise, pronounce and spell?
9. Which country is planning to leap a day ahead in order to put itself on the same weekday as its neighbours?
10. In a cult TV series, Scott, Virgil, Alan, Gordon and John worked for which organisation? ♣

## Did you know?

IMAX Melbourne has topped the global box office for April 2011 (in front of Montreal and Washington DC) with their screening of Born to be Wild 3D. This gorgeous film is about the amazing people who take care for orphaned baby orang-utans in Borneo and elephants in Kenya. IMAX Melbourne is delighted and humbled by this huge response! ♣

ANSWERS  
 1. Endeavour 2. Manchester City 3. Edmund Barton 4. Spanish-born Julio Iglesias 5. Diamonds 6. the goat 7. Clarnet 8. Kodak 9. Samoa 10. International Rescue ♣



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## TAXI

# \$505,500

### transfers

### ASSIGNMENTS

metro taxis 54

### LICENCE TRANSFERS

metro taxis 11  
urban 0  
country taxis 3  
hire car licences 11  
special licences 2

### LICENCES ISSUED

taxi licences 44  
hire car licences 7  
special vehicles 2  
RH vehicles 3

### LICENCES TRADED BY ASSIGNMENT

(April 2010 - April 2011)  
total = 1,141

## Number of Taxi

# Licences APRIL 2011

**METROPOLITAN** 4,179

(including 362 WAT vehicles)

**COUNTRY** 520

(including 113 WAT vehicles)

**OUTER SUBURBAN** 154

(including 27 WAT vehicles)

**URBAN** 237

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

**TOTAL** 5,090

(including 537 WAT vehicles)

### NUMBER OF DRIVERS

Active drivers 16,000 APPROX

Accredited drivers 25,000 APPROX

# Compliance

## outcomes (1-28 February 2011)

Taxi Inspections 2,473  
Rectification Notices 473  
Infringement Notices 127  
Notices of Unroadworthiness 36  
Official Warnings 30

## HIRE CARS

avg metropolitan licence transfer value

# \$56,190

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