

VOICE  
OF THE TAXI INDUSTRY

# TAXITALK

MAGAZINE

Official journal of the Victorian Taxi Association  
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SILVER TOP TAXIS  
CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE VICTORIAN TAXI ASSOCIATION

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# Promote your services and build business

**Neil Sach** VTA CEO

It came as a surprise when Blair Davies phoned me to advise that he is leaving the taxi industry to take up the new role of Business Commissioner with the Queensland Government. (See separate article.)

Mind you, whilst it being a surprise it was not completely unexpected given his expertise and experience in working in the fields of business policy and strategy, and working with Government to find a solution to business and regulatory issues.

Blair's departure will not only be felt by the Queensland Taxi Council but sorely by the Australian Taxi Industry Association where he held the position of Secretary and Chief Executive Officer and will leave a huge gap to somehow be filled. He was also an overseas Vice President of the Taxi, Limousine and Paratransit Association based in the United States.

Blair's work at the ATIA was important for Victoria in regard to disability standards, Productivity Commission inquiries, matters around de-regulation, taxi equip-

ment standards, fuel pricing and excise, and specific issue lobbying at a Federal level.

I, for one, will greatly miss his dogma, persistence, strength of thought, logic and humour. Yes, Queensland's gain is most certainly the taxi industry's loss. The VTA thanks Blair for the work done by him and wish him the very best for the future.

On the home front here in Victoria, the VTA continues to nag the Government about the need for a fare increase, the cost of re-programming urban and country meters, and other matters around driver training and accreditation.

An emerging worry for the taxi industry is the use of mobile telephone apps to book a taxi. While there will continue to be issues around misleading advertising and whether or not such systems constitute a secondary network, a major concern with some apps is that they can be used by non-taxis and non-taxi drivers to hold themselves out as accredited taxi services.

The dangers of such activity are obvious and open the door to op-

portunities for abduction, rape, assault, robbery, exploitation, discrimination, etc. If the State and Federal governments do not seriously and adequately address this matter, I believe they could be held culpable if things go wrong for the public in terms of safety and security.

Finally, as we head for the festive and holiday season it is important that taxi operators and drivers take stock of their performance and their knowledge of events and customer demand. Victoria remains a favourite destination for visitors and holiday makers and many will be looking for taxis to move them around. It's a great opportunity to promote your services and build business.

Remember it is an offence for a taxi passenger to carry an open container of alcoholic drink in a taxi or to consume alcoholic drink in a taxi. ♣

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In front of an estimated crowd of 4,000 people, Archer became the first winner of the Melbourne Cup. Today, the Melbourne Cup is the richest handicap race held in Australia, and the prize money and trophies make it among the richest horseraces in the world.

Flemington was fairly rough in the early days with little in the way of running rails or stands. But the Melbourne Cup quickly became popular as a carnival with picnic parties, sideshows, celebrations and people showing off their latest fashions. Socialites, politicians and Australia's rich and famous attended the Cup right from the earliest days, as they still do today.

Champion horses have always thrilled spectators. There are stories of endurance, scandal, controversy, tragedy and heroism including great horses such as:

Carbine (1890)  
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Comic Court (1950)

Rising Fast (1954)

Rain Lover (1968 & 1969)

Kiwi (1983)

Vintage Crop (1993)

Might and Power (1997)

Makybe Diva (2003, 2004 & 2005).

From Etienne de Mestre in the 1860s and 1870s, and Lee Freedman in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, who have both trained five Cup winners, to the 'Cup's King' Bart Cummings, who since 1965 has won 12 Cups, horse trainers continue to strive to set records in thoroughbred racing. \*

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# Regional taximeter update



Since December 2008, the Victorian Taxi Directorate (VTD) has authorised drivers of urban and country taxis to collect a holiday surcharge (HS) as an off-meter charge for trips on specified days over the Christmas – New Year period.

Off-meter charges of this nature are problematic as arrangements are not transparent and can often lead to conflict between the driver and passenger/s. Consequently, the VTD has determined that for the coming Christmas – New Year period, and beyond, the HS must be incorporated and displayed on the taximeter. Collection of the HS as an off-meter charge is not permitted.

The VTD has consulted taximeter manufacturers and is satisfied that almost all makes/models of taximeters currently fitted into urban and/or country taxi-cabs can be made compliant with the HS

requirements, including disabling of the Late Night Fee during the period/s the HS applies. Those taximeters that cannot accommodate the HS must be replaced.

A separate notice to taxi operators reads as follows:

The operators of vehicles licensed as urban (Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo) taxi-cabs and country taxi-cabs (excluding those licensed to operate in the Outer-suburban taxi-cab zone) are required, by this notice, to have their taximeters modified/reprogrammed by 1 December 2011 so that each taximeter will automatically:

- disable the late night fee (\$3.00) during the specified HS period
- apply the HS on the taximeter during the specified HS period and
- separate/quarantine the HS amount for the purpose of

end-of-shift settlement to ensure the HS is retained in full by the driver as required under legislation.

The specified holiday surcharge periods are:

- Christmas Day (25 December)
- Boxing Day (26 December)
- New Year's Eve – 6pm to midnight (31 December)
- New Year's Day (1 January).

Taximeters that cannot meet these requirements will cease to be an approved taximeter for use in urban or country taxi-cabs effective from 1 December 2011.

The VTD will distribute labels for display inside taxis to alert passengers that the \$3.70 HS is inclusive of the metered fare and that no additional (off-meter) amount representing a HS should be paid.

For further information please contact Brendan Healy or Steve Goldsworthy of the VTD on telephone 1800 638 802. \*

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SN431

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GLV\_1111

# Qld's gain is taxi industry loss

In line with our ongoing commitment to slash red tape, the Queensland Government has appointed a Business Commissioner.

Finance Minister Rachel Nolan said Blair Davies will head the newly established unit to drive reform and help Queensland's business community capitalise on the state's next wave of prosperity.

"It gives me great pleasure to announce Blair Davies as our inaugural Business Commissioner," Ms Nolan said.

"Blair joins the Government after nine years as CEO of the Taxi Council of Queensland - an industry that knows its fair share about regulation.

"He has also previously worked as a Business Strategies Advisor with the Brisbane City Council.

"I have full confidence in his ability to hunt out unnecessary regulation and provide a strong interface between Government and business."

The new Business Commissioner said he is looking forward to getting to work in his new role.

"Like most Queenslanders I know our state has a bright economic future," Mr Davies said.

"Through my experience, both with the Taxi Council and also with the Brisbane City Council, I know that regulations can add an unnecessary burden to hardworking business people.

"I look forward to getting to work with my newly established office to cut red tape here in Queensland."

Minister for Tourism, Manufacturing and Small Business Jan Jarratt said today's announcement was part of a swathe of work being done by the Government to slash red tape.

"The Business Council of Australia has endorsed the Queensland Government's performance cutting red tape and we're committed to keeping this momentum

going," Ms Jarratt said.

"Last year they gave our state the second highest overall achievement rating of any state on red tape reduction.

We also recently announced our intention to legislate to ensure that all new laws are subject to the Regulatory Assessment Statement process.

"This means that all new legislation is further scrutinised to prevent the development of unnecessary regulations.

"We are committed to ensuring that doing business in Queensland is as easy as possible and today's announcement will keep our focus strategic."

The establishment of the Queensland Business Commissioner follows advocacy over red



tape from both the Australian Industry Group (AiGroup) and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ). ♦

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SynCat's gas conversion test rigs can run around the clock, unmanned for months at a time to produce data critical to understanding how gas can be more efficiently converted into synthetic liquid fuels.

Australia has a rich endowment of natural gas, most of which is located in deep waters offshore or as coal seam gas. By its nature, gas is difficult and expensive to transport over long distances. To best utilise this resource, CSIRO is looking at a variety of ways to liquify or transform natural gas into a transportable liquid product.✿



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#### ASSIGNMENTS

metro taxis 87

#### LICENCE TRANSFERS

metro taxis	0
urban	0
country taxis	4
hire car licences	2
special licences	1

#### LICENCES ISSUED

taxi licences	57
hire car licences	2
special vehicles	0
RH vehicles	3

#### LICENCES TRADED BY

**ASSIGNMENT** (Sept '10 - Sept '11)

Total = 981

**TAXI**  
**\$490,000**

transfers

## Number of Taxi Licences

October 2011

**METROPOLITAN** 4,823  
(including 482 WAT vehicles )

**COUNTRY** 637  
(including 113 WAT vehicles)

**OUTER SUBURBAN** 187  
(including 31WAT vehicles)

**URBAN** 272  
(Ballarat - Bendigo - Geelong)  
(including 35 WAT vehicles)

**TOTAL** 5,919  
(including 633 WAT vehicles)

#### NUMBER OF DRIVERS

Active drivers	16,000 APPROX
Accredited drivers	25,000 APPROX

## Compliance

outcomes (1-30 September 2011)

Taxi Inspections	2,855
Rectification Notices	672
Infringement Notices	99
Notices of Unroadworthiness	30
Official Warnings	27

**VICTORIAN HIRE CARS**

avg metropolitan licence transfer value

**\$58,300**

2011 Victorian Taxi Association

# ANNUAL LUNCHEON

**When:** Wednesday 7 December 2011  
**Where:** Governor's Wing  
Hilton on the Park  
Wellington Parade  
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**Time:** Noon with pre-lunch drinks  
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VTA Annual Luncheon registration forms are available from Linda or Niamh at the VTA. Please call 9676 2635 or email [clients@victaxi.com.au](mailto:clients@victaxi.com.au).

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# A HIGH LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

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## COMING TO GRIPS WITH ISSUES THAT MATTER

### *Pleased to meet you.*

In my first *Taxi Talk* column as Acting General Manager of the VTD I wish to introduce myself and set out my priorities moving forward.

Prior to joining the VTD as Deputy General Manager, I worked at WorkSafe Victoria. There I held a variety of leadership roles in regulatory operations, strategy and policy across health, safety and workers compensation. I want to bring this focus on safety to my new role as taxi industry regulator, to ensure that passengers continue to receive safe, reliable and convenient taxi services.

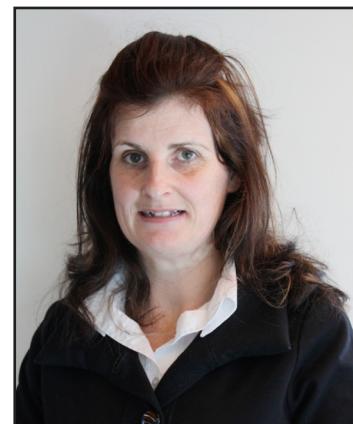
During my time at the VTD so far, I've been impressed by the number of passionate taxi industry participants I've had the pleasure of meeting. I am looking forward to working with you all to build a better industry over the next 12 months, as the Inquiry conducts its review.

I wish to reiterate that until those recommendations have been implemented, it will be business as usual for the VTD in how we go about regulating the industry.

The recent announcements you may have read in the papers are proof that it's full steam ahead for the VTD. New guidelines have been introduced to provide clarity to Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) regarding what the VTD expects of them as training providers. In consultation with the industry, the VTD has also introduced a Quality Assurance Program to strengthen the driver accreditation process so that only the most qualified drivers are allowed behind the wheel.

I believe in a collaborative approach with key stakeholders and I am committed to the VTD fostering meaningful, constructive and transparent partnerships with industry participants to effect tangible, long lasting improvements. As a case in point, our representative groups – the Taxi Driver Forum, Taxi Operator Forum and the Taxi Fleet Forum – provide a unique opportunity for the VTD and key industry participants to meet, discuss and resolve issues of importance.

On a concluding note, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of my predecessor, Peter Corcoran. He oversaw many significant initiatives that have improved the industry. Like Peter, I believe we should strive towards being the best taxi industry in Australia and I look forward to working with all of you towards that goal. ♣



**“During my time at the VTD so far, I’ve been impressed by the number of passionate taxi industry participants I’ve had the pleasure of meeting.”**

**GM - MARNIE WILLIAMS**



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# VTA update to Parliament

On 4 October, the VTA sent the following letter to all State members of Parliament. The attachments referred to in the letter have not been included here.

Dear Member,

On 28 June 2011, I wrote to all members of the Victorian Parliament in regard to the Taxi Industry Inquiry. A copy of that letter is attached.

As the Inquiry has effectively been in operation since late March 2011, it is timely that the Victorian Taxi Association (VTA) present you with an update on what has been happening from its perspective.

The VTA has made six submissions to the Inquiry on various matters. These can be found on the VTA website [www.victaxi.com.au](http://www.victaxi.com.au).

Professor Fels has mentioned several times that New Zealand is a potential model for Victoria. This being so, the VTA visited there specifically to study the New Zealand taxi scene. The findings of the VTA study are contained in a report, also posted on the VTA website.

Key findings from the VTA report include:

- NZ taxis customers share the same concerns as Victorian taxi customers
- Wheelchair accessible taxi transport is underdeveloped
- Fares setting is completely deregulated and by 'taxi companies'
- NZ taxis are considerably more expensive than Victorian taxis.
- Regional taxi services in NZ were decimated by the 1989 reform process
- NZ deregulation was followed by 20 years of substandard taxi services.

It seemed to the VTA that the Inquiry was initiated based on customer satisfaction surveys under-

taken by the DOT. The taxi industry itself, and more particularly the VTA, had requested many times to see the details of these surveys, but this was always refused. Finally, the VTA had to initiate action under FOI, which resulted in the survey information being supplied.

As aspects of the DOT surveys raised questions and because the surveys did not extend to regional areas, the VTA engaged Auspoll to undertake an independent customer survey of over 1000 participants, including a representative sample of regional taxi users.

The Auspoll survey indicated , amongst other things, that:

- 82% of Victorians rated Victorian cabs as good, fair, or excellent.
- 92% of regional Victorians rated their cabs as good, fair, or excellent.
- 73% of respondents who had hired a taxi in another Australia state or territory believe that the Victorian taxi service is better or equal to the services in these jurisdictions.
- 58% of Victorians expect drivers to know more than 100 locations of significance on their first day of work.
- 60% of Victorians believe that improving "pay and conditions" for drivers would subsequently improve the service.

To further understanding of the Auspoll survey, over the next few weeks passengers will be invited to participate in an in-taxi survey. This survey will be undertaken during the course of the trip and the sealed envelope given to the driver at the end of the trip. Envelopes interfered with will be discarded from

the survey.

I mentioned that the VTA has made six submissions to the Inquiry. One of these is particularly important for the future structure of Victoria's taxi services. A copy of this submission is also attached for your information.

At this stage, the VTA is not aware of any formal reform proposals being tabled by the Inquiry. Most discussion appears to be centred on the observations of Inquiry commissioners. The VTA understands that the Inquiry has a raft of matters to bring together and consider, and remains patient to ensure matters are considered carefully and sensibly.

The VTA continues to maintain that a fare increase is well overdue in Victoria. The last increase was granted in late 2008. The VTA respect the fact there is an Inquiry underway and substantive policy change will, in all likelihood, be delayed until the findings can be released. However, Victorian taxi fares have not kept pace with inflation. There has been a 12% increase in CPI since the last fare increase. As a result, the VTA is calling for an urgent fare adjustment.

The VTA would be happy to meet with you in person should you require further explanation of any of the matters raised here, or in relation to taxis in Victoria generally.

Yours faithfully

NEIL SACH  
Chief Executive Officer 

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# Insurance for taxis



The VTA is concerned at the lack of availability of vehicle insurance for taxis and the escalating cost of it, and has asked the Taxi Industry Inquiry to look into the matter.

Dear Professor Fels,

Taxi operators have advised the VTA that over the last five years premiums for comprehensive vehicle insurance for taxis have doubled.

The VTA is advised that the availability of comprehensive vehicle insurance for taxis has become difficult to obtain, and where it is available is being offered at a higher premium. The VTA has heard of premiums being in the order of between \$2,700pa and \$4,000pa for a standard taxi depending upon claim history and vehicle age. For a WAT it appears to vary between \$5,000 and \$12,000 (or even more) depending upon claim history and vehicle age. This situation is common to taxi operators state-wide, and it seems that it is leading to more and more taxi operators not comprehensively insuring vehicles. In some cases they appear to be seeking out participation in what are commonly called taxi clubs or self aid groups, which are not

insurance providers or effectively regulated.

Uninsured or inappropriately insured vehicles are a burden to the Industry and the community. A lack of genuine insurance options for taxi operators creates numerous issues and has a flow on affect to bailee drivers, particularly where the bailment agreement fails to provide any level of indemnity for the driver.

The VTA requests that the Inquiry examine the availability and premium level of taxi insurance. It may be necessary for the Inquiry to bring the matter of insurance and the possibility of price gouging by certain companies before the appropriate authorities.

Yours sincerely

NEIL SACH  
Chief Executive Officer ♣

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# Most unexpected millionaires

Millionaires are inspiring, especially the ones who were not born with the proverbial 'silver spoon' in their mouths. According to Merrill Lynch, there are about 10 million millionaires in the world. Their stance on who is actually entitled to be called a millionaire, requires that they have liquid funds to invest of at least a million dollars. Now this doesn't include homes, cars, yachts, second homes, etc. Ten million millionaires is a heck of a lot of rich people! These wealthy people comprise about .5% of the world's adult population, more than the entire population of Australia. 41% live in the U.S., 10% in Japan and 3% in China.

## Nina Vaca

Nina Vaca, from Quito Ecuador moved to Los Angeles when she was 2 years old. Her father instilled in her the 'American Dream' of becoming an entrepreneur. She started a company called Pinnacle Technical Resources, an information-technology company that in 2006 saw about \$60 million in revenue. The company today employs more than 600 people, in 23 differ-

ent cities including her siblings and husband and the 'American Dream' was realized.

## Mark Zuckerberg

While in college, being the not so typical geek, Mark started Facebook from his dorm room in 2004, thinking it was a great way for his classmates to stay in touch. He never intended for it to leave Harvard, however, after bringing on his col-

lege roommates, and expanding to other colleges – Facebook took off, first with the college kids, then high school students.... then the world. In June of 2006, corporations started joining, and in September of that same year, the floodgates opened. Today, the site holds more than 500 million users. Zuckerberg is believed to be worth about \$4 billion dollars.

by Kristy Ramirez ♣

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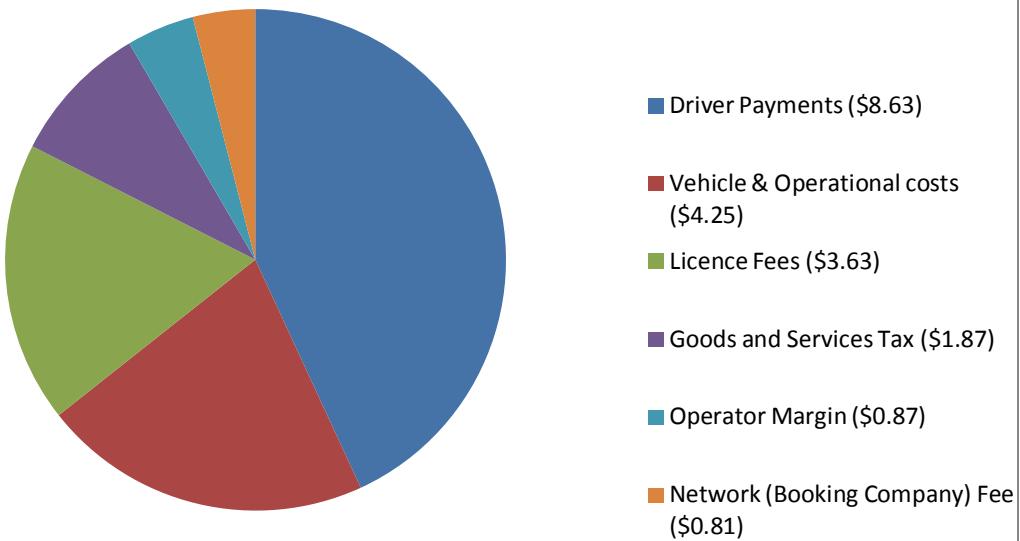
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se 09/11

# Breakdown of a \$20 fare

## \$20 Cash Taxi Fare



\*Numbers are taken from Herald Sun September 2011.

To improve the Victorian taxi fare structure, we first need to understand how the current structure works.

- The slice going to licence holders, particularly those who reside outside the industry as pure investors, is too large. The VTA believe the licence fee should be capped. The freed up revenue should be returned to the driver to lift their earnings above \$8- \$10 an hour, and ensure that the industry is able to attract and retain good drivers.
- The VTA advocate introducing a minimum contracted amount of 50% of each shift to be retained by the driver. To ensure the revenue referred to above is retained by the driver, a single State wide written agreement signed by every operator and driver entering into a bailment arrangement must be introduced and mandated.
- Over the medium to long term, prices for customers won't increase to the extent that they might otherwise, because the revenue flowing into the taxi will rise as a result of increased occupancy. As a result, fare increases will not be relied upon as heavily to ensure drivers are better remunerated.
- The notion that operators and booking companies take too much of the pie is overwhelmed by the evidence. For the supply of the booking equipment, the technology in the taxi (including vital components for driver and passenger safety) the booking company receives \$0.81 from every \$20 spent in a Melbourne taxi. The operator receives \$0.87 out of every \$20 after they pay for the vehicle and other operating costs like fuel and insurance. Without their investment there simply wouldn't be a taxi.
- The pie at present is not big enough. This is hardly surprising given that Victorian taxi fares have not moved since 2008. In this time CPI has increased by over 12%. Victorian fares are currently 30% lower than NSW and Qld taxi fares. \*

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**M**elbourne's taxi industry was devastated when two years ago, Silver Top's administration centre and communications hub in Collingwood was totally destroyed by fire. The taxi industry Australia wide, was then stunned that the management and staff, in an incredible 24 hour period were able to resurrect their communications network and continued day-to-day operations from various facilities around Melbourne.

Today, that same team, is beaming with pride as they move back to, not only their old address, but a new premises which is arguably the best taxi network facility in the world.

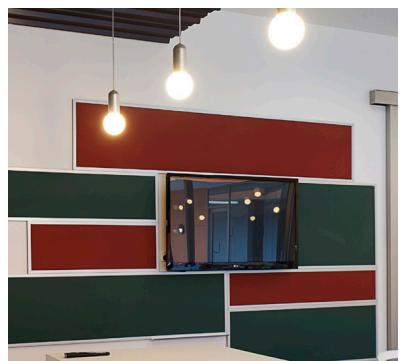
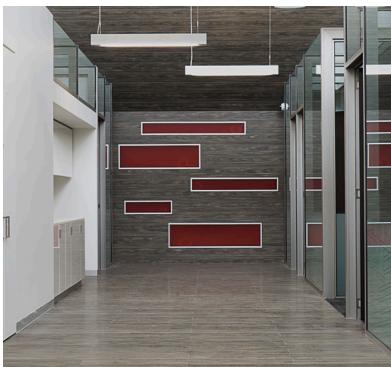
"We have built this new facility from the ground up to enable our staff to provide a first class service to our operators and drivers" says Business Manager Kevin Gange. The new call centre will house the MT Data satellite booking system which has led the industry since its launch 18 months ago.

"I am confident our operators and drivers will be very pleased with the resources the new facility brings" says General Manager Andrew Gilmartin.

In an industry that will face many challenges over the next few years Silver Top has made a substantial financial investment demonstrating its commitment to remain Melbourne's icon of the taxi industry.



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Peak service taxis are authorised to operate between 7am and 3pm from Station Pier precinct, Port Melbourne\*, on the days specified below.

Wednesday 14 December 2011

Tuesday 27 December 2011

Monday 9 January 2012

Sunday 22 January 2012

Saturday 4 February 2012

Friday 17 February 2012

Thursday 1 March 2012

Wednesday 14 March 2012

\*The Station Pier precinct refers to Station Pier, Waterfront Place and Beach Street, Port Melbourne, between Bay Street and Swallow Street, Port Melbourne).

Peak service taxis are not allowed to undertake any street hire (rank/hall) or radio bookings during these hours other than from Station Pier. ♣



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Applicants for metropolitan taxi and hire car accreditation who are from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background are now required to supply an English language certificate as part of their application rather than provide the certificate or be assessed by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO) conducting the driver accreditation training.

In addition, English language certificate will now only be accepted if the assessment has been conducted in Australia in the last 12 months by an RTO which is authorised to assess English language competency and issue a certificate.

This requirement will take effect for applicants for commercial passenger vehicle accreditation across the State from 5 December 2011.

Applicants who have any questions or require assistance are advised to visit [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au) or contact the VTD on 1800 638 802 (toll-free). ♦

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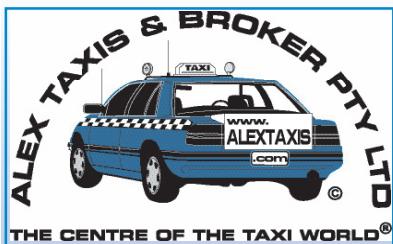
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# West Gate Bridge extra lanes

Traffic is flowing freely thanks to the extra lanes across the West Gate Bridge with drivers enjoying quicker, safer and less frustrating journeys crossing Melbourne – and the project has been recognized as one of excellence.

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said recognition in the Victorian Engineers Australia 2011 Engineering Excellence Awards showed an innovative and collaborative view was the best approach towards infrastructure delivery.

"While awards are not the aim of our infrastructure investment, they signal that we are on the right track in delivering infrastructure for Australia," Mr Albanese said.

Victorian Roads Minister Terry Mulder said recent data showed traffic speed in the morning peak had increased 111 per cent, from an average of 36 kilometres an hour to 76 kilometres.

"In addition, the afternoon peak has seen similar improvements with average travel speeds increasing by 64 per cent, from 44 to 72 kilometres an hour," Mr Mulder said.



Mr Albanese and Mr Mulder said major works to strengthen the West Gate Bridge were completed in late June allowing five lanes to run each way on the bridge.

The works are part of the Nation Building Program West Gate Bridge Strengthening project, jointly funded by the Australian and Victorian governments.

"In addition to the significant traffic speed improvements, the new lanes also provide greater road space with approximately 1,000 additional vehicles able to cross

the bridge during peak times," Mr Albanese said.

"This has clearly proven a great benefit for Melbourne drivers, especially those making a daily trip in from the western suburbs and Geelong."

Mr Mulder said that it was gratifying to see such impressive and immediate results with the new lanes open, and VicRoads, Transurban and the many contractors involved rewarded for their hard work and vision. ♦

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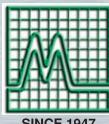
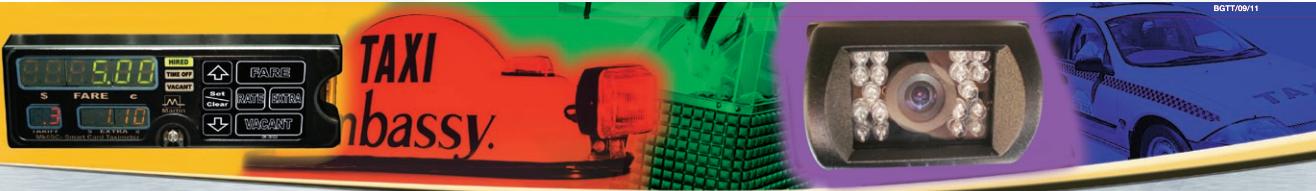
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BGTT/09/11



## MOVEMBER CHANGING THE FACE OF MEN'S HEALTH

On November 1, men across Australia will be starting the month clean shaven and embarking on a Mo-growing mission to raise awareness of men's health issues, especially depression and prostate cancer.

On average, one in eight men will experience depression in their lifetime – that's almost one million men who will be affected. Anxiety is even more common. Less than half receive help and what's worse is the risk of suicide for those seriously affected.

On November 1, guys register at Movember.com and start the month clean-shaven. Mo Bros (men who grow a Mo), supported Mo Sistas (women who love a Mo) then spend the next 30 days , raising funds by seeking out sponsorship for their Mo growing efforts.

Acting CEO of beyondblue Clare Shann says Movember provides men (and women) with the opportunity to talk about men's health – not just during Movember, but all year round – and beyondblue is very pleased and proud to be part of the conversation.

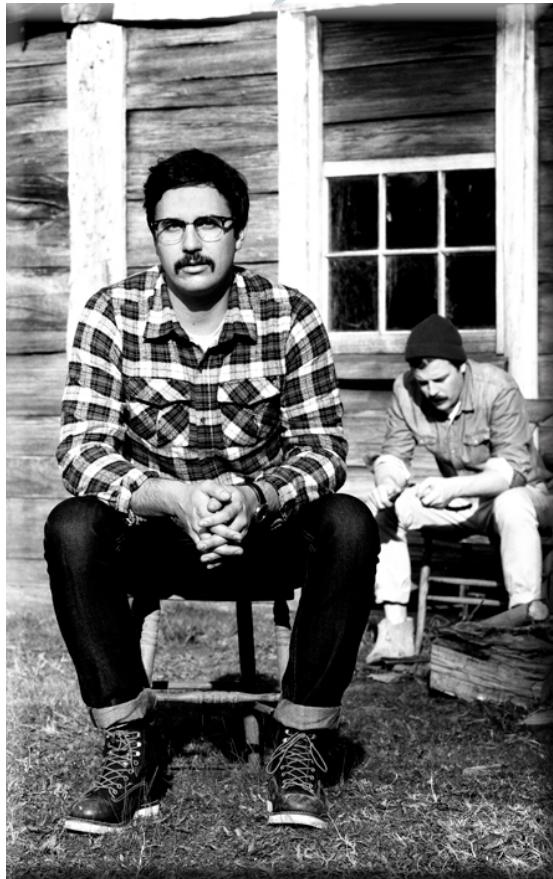
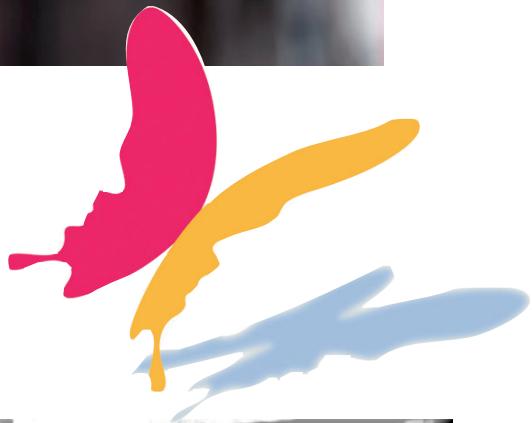
"Movember has not only made it OK for men to talk about their mental and physical health, but the campaign continues to raise money to help beyondblue fund important research and men's health programs throughout Australia," says Clare.

beyondblue has been a beneficiary of funding from Movember since 2006, and last year received \$10,370,000 for men's health programs.

The money donated to beyondblue by Movember is spent on projects agreed to by both organisations. Movember donations fund a range of beyondblue projects including the info line and programs and research to address the mental health needs of all men including older men, first-time fathers, men in the workplace, gay men and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

"In 2010 over 130,000 Australian Mo Bros and Sistas got on board the campaign. We are so grateful to all the Mo Bros and Mo Sistas and to all the staff at Movember who, year after year, create such a fantastic campaign. I encourage everyone to register for Movember 2011 – [www.movember.com](http://www.movember.com). Let's continue to increase the understanding of depression and anxiety in men and reduce the associated stigmas," says Clare.

To register or for more information visit [www.movember.com](http://www.movember.com) 



# CALENDAR

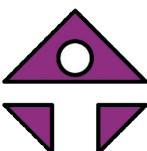
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Course #	Day	Date
202	1	Mon 14 November
	2	Tue 15 November
	3	Wed 16 November

Course #	Day	Date
203	1	Mon 12 December
	2	Tue 13 December
	3	Wed 14 December



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# Contact your taxi industry repr

The Taxi Driver Forum, Taxi Fleet Forum and the Taxi Operator Forum have been established by the VTD to strengthen communication channels with the taxi industry.

These groups allow industry participants to effectively pass on information and concerns through to their representatives who can raise these matters with the VTD. ☺

## Taxi **Driver** Forum

First Name	Surname	Email	Phone
Ali	Abou-eid	kbouns@gmail.com	0419 560 502
Kashif	Bouns	NA	0423 110 269
Chris	Coucill	ccoucill@gmail.com	0428 256 640
Cliff	Hayes	taxicliff@net2000.com.au	0418 500 543
Nibret	Kassa	nibretkassa@hotmail.com	0415 964 382
Muhammad	Tayab	tayab_chinyoty@live.com.au	0432 377 359
Raj	Singh	australia_raj@yahoo.com	0406 474 651
Robin	Smith	NA	0410 469 768
Amanda	Webb	oddcouple@sunet.com.au	0432 595 265
Gloria	White	NA	0418 627 595
Murad	Yonis	muradabdullahi@hotmail.com	0402 756 407

## Taxi **Fleet** Forum

(larger operators)

First name	Surname	Email	Phone
John	Vlassopoulos	johnvlass@optusnet.com.au	0414 585 434
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Robert	Dowie	robertdowie@gmail.com	0412 132 227
Hans	Althoff	hans34@hotkey.net.au	0414 939 841

## Taxi Operator Forum

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Wayne	Uebergang	Ctry-Hamilton	admin@taxisofhamilton.com.au	0409 332 368
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Christina	Liosis	Metro	christina.liosis@telstrasuper.com.au	0414 816 902
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John	Munro	Metro	John.Munro4@bigpond.com	0411 196 237
Abdiwahab	Qalnle	Metro	sacadin@y7mail.com	0413 821 153
Fateh	Wardak	Metro	fateh.wardak@gmail.com	0419 561 670

## Newsletters

The VTD industry newsletters, Drive Time and Taxi Bulletin, are now available. Read about VTD's latest initiatives and developments which may impact you.

Grab a copy today. Download it from [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au) or pick up a copy from your depot, the VTD Taxi Inspection Centre or the VTD Customer Service Centre. ☺

**Taxi Bulletin** November 2011

**taxi INDUSTRY INQUIRY**

A taxi industry inquiry is currently underway into all aspects of the taxi industry. The inquiry will consider the taxi industry's set of reforms to achieve better outcomes for passengers and operators. Following the inquiry, a Tax Industry Inquiry Panel will take over the role of industry inquiry and will be responsible for the tools necessary to reform the industry.

Unit 10, 202 Flinders Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Post Locked Bag 20204, Melbourne VIC 3001  
Phone: 1800 020 440

**TSOs at Melbourne Airport**

The VTD has dedicated two Transport Safety Officers at Melbourne Airport, targeting substandard taxi-cabs that are not meeting industry standards.

As part of a new Quality Assurance Program, vehicles deemed to be non-compliant will be subject to further checks and will be required to undertake Full Vehicle Inspections at the VTD.

In some instances, some taxi-cabs may be presumed non-compliant and will be required to undergo a vehicle inspection before further checks are complete.

**taxi INDUSTRY INQUIRY**

All taxis across Victoria are now required to display two external and up to four internal price boards. All price boards must be clearly legible and visible to the general public. This was distributed through Network Service Providers for collection on no cost.

Operators must ensure that their price boards are visible from the curb.

**Prepaid fare labels**

Future supplies of prepaid fare labels will be limited to 1000 labels. There is no limit on the number of labels per taxi.

To view the specific:

**Victoria Taxi Directorate**

**Drive Time** November 2011

**taxi INDUSTRY INQUIRY**

A taxi industry inquiry is currently underway into all aspects of the taxi industry. The inquiry will consider the taxi industry's set of reforms to achieve better outcomes for passengers and operators. Following the inquiry, a Tax Industry Inquiry Panel will take over the role of industry inquiry and will be responsible for the tools necessary to reform the industry.

The Tax Services Commission will be established as a statutory authority, at which time VTD staff and resources will be transferred.

Unit 10, 202 Flinders Street, Melbourne VIC 3000  
Post Locked Bag 20204, Melbourne VIC 3001  
Phone: 1800 020 440

**VTD fare evasion**

Over the coming months, the VTD will be switching over to a more electronic platform for communicating with the industry. This will enable the VTD to provide more detailed information to drivers, operators, NSPs and other important industry stakeholders.

If you would like to register to receive notifications from the VTD, please send your email address, and mobile phone number and DC number to [customerservice@taxi.vic.gov.au](mailto:customerservice@taxi.vic.gov.au). Alternatively, fill out the response card and mail to the VTD.

**VTD needs your e-details**

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**Cracking down on rogue drivers**

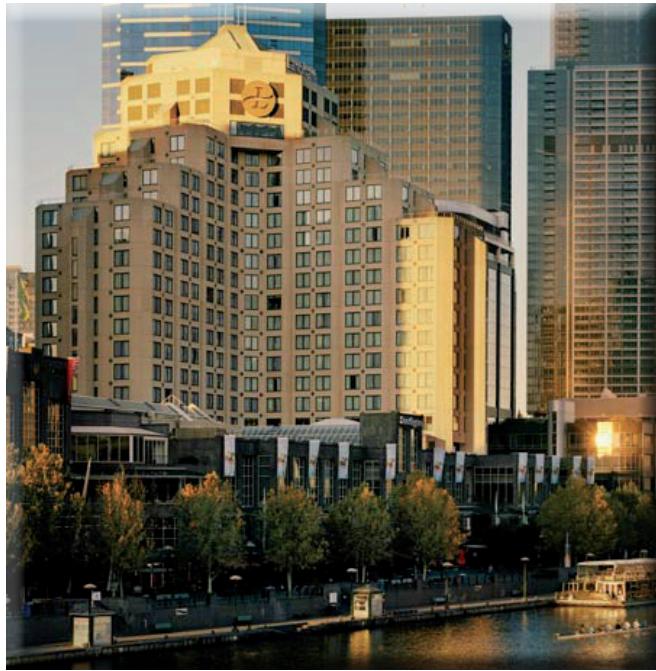
The Victorian Tax Directorate has announced a new criminal justice initiative to boost the safety of commercial passenger vehicle (CPV) passengers.

All offenders will be subject to continuing checks for criminal offences.

The new arrangement will ensure that the VTD is made aware of any criminal offence committed by anyone in accredited drivers.

All drivers subject to such checking on application and renewal of accreditation.

# Enforcement, regulation &



## Taxis at the Langham Hotel

Taxi drivers are requested that they not enter the Langham Hotel Private Property area unless they are picking up and dropping off guests of the hotel.

Instead, taxi drivers should use the on-street "No Parking – 5 minute limit" parking areas provided in the Riverside Quay to drop-off passengers. ♦

**Submit  
your  
e-details**



## Is refusing a fare really worth risking a \$305 fine?



The Project FRET initiative is gaining momentum with the VTD Transport Safety Officers cracking down on drivers who refuse fares. So far, 17 Infringement Notices (\$305) and eight warning notices have been issued to drivers for refusing fares. Drivers who refuse fares will be caught and penalised. Don't risk a fine, accept all fares. ♦

The Victorian Taxi Directorate (VTD) is embarking on new ways to communicate timely information to taxi industry participants by harnessing electronic communication tools such as email, SMS and social media.

If you wish to receive updates from the VTD, send your name, drivers certificate/accreditation number (as appropriate), email address and mobile phone number to: [vtdcontact@transport.vic.gov.au](mailto:vtdcontact@transport.vic.gov.au)

Note: The VTD is committed to protecting your privacy by fully meeting its responsibilities under the Information Privacy Act (Vic) 2000 and the Health Records Act (Vic) 2001. The complete privacy statement for the VTD is available at [www.transport.vic.gov.au](http://www.transport.vic.gov.au) ♦

## Incident Reporting System



Victoria Police has established a new incident reporting system for the taxi industry.

The new system will enable Victoria Police to better identify problems affecting the industry and allocate law enforcement resources to tackle critical issues.

A copy of the taxi incident notification form is available for download from [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au)

Important: In emergency situations, driver should still dial '000'. ♦

## Changes to driver accreditation at VicRoads

From 5 December 2011, applications for driver accreditation and applications to renew driver accreditation will not be processed on the spot at VicRoads offices across the state.

From this date, applications lodged at VicRoads offices will be forwarded to the VTD for processing.

Once your application or

renewal has been assessed by the VTD you will receive your accreditation certificate in the post. This process may take up to 10 business days.

If you are submitting your application for renewal at a VicRoads office on or after 5 December 2011 please ensure that you submit it at least 2 weeks before it is due to expire.

Please note that applications will be accepted at the VTD office in person and will be processed on the spot.

Applications for renewal of driver accreditation are sent out 8 weeks in advance. To ensure their accreditation does not expire, drivers are urged to submit their application for renewal as early as possible. ♦



## Letting the VTD know when circumstances change

Are you going away on holidays and need to nominate a relevant person for a short period? Have you moved address? Do you need to add a relevant person?

You must let the Victorian Taxi Directorate (VTD) know if there is a change in circumstances in respect to an accreditation or an accredited person within 7 days from when you become aware of the change.

For the change to take effect, the applicant must receive a relevant change approval letter from the VTD clarifying that the change has been made for the nominated person and period.

For further information, please contact the VTD on 1800 638 802 (toll-free). ♦

# Taxi rank funding

**NEW**



Applications are now open for the next round of the \$4 million Taxi Rank Safety Program (TRSP), which provides infrastructure grants to councils throughout Victoria to improve local taxi ranks.

Minister for Public Transport Terry Mulder announced the 2011-12 round of the TRSP was open and said the funding allocation of \$1 million for this financial year was about boosting safety and amenity for taxi passengers and drivers.

Under the program, councils can apply for grants to improve safety through such works as the installation of CCTV systems, upgraded lighting or the provi-

sion of shelters and seating so passengers have more comfortable and secure areas from which to access taxis. The TRSP is administered by the Victorian Taxi Directorate.

Community groups, businesses and taxi companies with an interest in the program should contact their local council.

All councils are encouraged to apply. Applications for funding close on Friday 11 November 2011. For more information about the program or to register an expression of interest councils can visit [www.taxi.vic.gov.au](http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au)

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# Ringwood Station

## interchange upgrade proposal

The long awaited project to upgrade Ringwood Station is planned to commence in 2014/15 at a cost predicted to be around \$60 million.

Since June 2011, the Department of Transport (DOT) has been working with local representatives, businesses and public transport users to develop a proposed concept for upgrading the Ringwood Station precinct.

So far, the community involvement has included:

This proposed concept has been developed with extensive input from the local community

- a station and precinct that is accessible for all
- a station and precinct environment that is safe and attractive
- an area that is a destination of choice
- a design that has considered the needs of the future
- an interchange and public space that facilitates connections between transport modes and through the precinct.

The Department of Transport is now seeking feedback from the wider community to help determine a final concept for the station precinct.

Responding to community input, thirteen layout options were developed for the precinct. These options were scored against the above criteria, as well as criteria for cost and constructability, and functionality. To view all the details please visit the Department of Transport website at: <http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/projects/pt/ringwood-station-and-interchange-upgrade>

The VTA when viewing these plans was disappointed to once again notice the provision for taxi services appears to have taken a back seat to other modes of transport.

In feedback to DOT the VTA noted the following:

- Too few spaces have been allocated to taxis
- There appears to be no dedicated provision for WATs
- The taxi rank is located alongside parking for disabled patrons and "Kiss N' Ride" drop off zones
- The VTA has asked DOT to consider providing more spaces (both standard and WAT vehicles) as well as a dedicated taxi rank. Mixed modes only confuses custom. ♣



# Melbourne Cup Carnival

There are always opportunities for taxi drivers to maximise their income from servicing major sporting events. They are almost always dependent upon a drivers' ability to familiarize himself/herself with how ranks will operate during the Spring Racing Carnival. Easy access and egress are the keys to keeping the meter ticking over.

You must do some preparation if you want to end up a winner. First, get your Melway (maps 2S, 2T, 28 and 42) to become familiar with how best to access and exit the racecourse and surrounds.



## DERBY DAY

The Melbourne Cup Carnival ignites with one of the world's great racedays - AAMI Victoria Derby Day. Considered by most racing purists to be the best single day of thoroughbred racing in Australia, AAMI Victoria Derby Day is an all-Group raceday featuring nine races, four at the elite Group 1 level.

The official flower for the meeting is the cornflower.

## MELBOURNE CUP DAY

The \$6.175 million Emirates Melbourne Cup is a truly spectacular event and the focal point of the Melbourne Cup Carnival. While most of Australia stops to watch or listen to the race, there's nothing like being there amongst the 100,000 plus crowd to experience this truly unique event.

The 3200m race is run at 3pm on the first Tuesday of November and is the richest prize in Australian sport.

It is the day to make your strongest fashion statement with an exotic or outrageous ensemble - hats are essential and so is a yellow rose in the lapel.



## OAKS DAY

Traditionally known as 'ladies day', the third day of the Melbourne Cup Carnival is Crown Oaks Day. This is the 'ultimate style day' of the Carnival, when women take the opportunity to express their own signature style.

The pink rose is the official flower of Crown Oaks Day.

## EMIRATES STAKES DAY

The final day of the Carnival is all about relaxed style, and the opportunity for the young ones to shine. For some, it is the day to deck out the little ones in the latest junior fashions, while for others it is simply a day to have fun with friends and family. The official flower for Emirates Stakes Day is the Red Rose.

## TAXIS, LIMOUSINES

### AND HIRE CARS

Taxis, Limousines and Hire Cars are not permitted entry to the Racecourse at Members Drive or Flemington Drive. Three main Taxi ranks operate throughout the four days of the Melbourne Cup Carnival:

## Main Taxi Rank

(Main Members / Public Turnstiles and Rose Arbour): Entry to the main taxi rank is at Stables Drive via Smithfield Road to the designated rank via the internal taxi road.

## Leonard Crescent Taxi Rank

(The Hill Turnstiles): Enter Leonard Crescent (one-way access) via Langs Road exiting via Fisher Parade.

## Elms Taxi Rank

(River Precinct): Entry to the Elms Precinct is at Lynches Bridge Gatehouse from Smithfield Road (one way access) to the designated taxi rank, exiting via Fisher Parade.

Holding Bays for Limousines are provided near each taxi rank and a client "call down" system will operate.

When approaching the various ranks during the exit phase of each day, all drivers are requested to ensure that their windows are closed, their doors are locked and that they only pick-up customers from the official ranks.

The primary reason for past customer dissatisfaction has been that people waiting at the ranks have seen taxis being hijacked by people as they approach the rank. Please help the event by only providing a service to those people who have co-operated with the taxi ranking system.

Have a great Spring Racing Carnival and please co-operate with the taxi supervisors who are there to make your job easier and more successful. \*

## Taxis/Limousines

- 1 Entry via Stables Drive to drop off at Main Turnstile

- 2 Entry via Lynch's Bridge to drop off at Elms Turnstile (one way)
- 3 Entry via Leonard Crescent to drop off at Hill Gate Turnstile (one way)



# TaxiServiceGuide



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# Paris gets transport revolution

Parisians will soon be able to use small electric cars, for a small charge and for short trips, in a car-sharing scheme its promoter's hope will herald a new era in transportation.

Dubbed "Autolib'", the plan is similar to the hugely successful Vélib' bike-share system launched in Paris four years ago.

A similar bicycle-sharing scheme is in operation in the Victorian state capital, Melbourne.

A two-month test involving 100 users began last month and the French news service France24 says Autolib' should be available to the public by early December.

The little four-seater cars, called "Bluecar", are entirely electric.

They have a top speed of 130km/h and can travel 250 kilometres on a single charge.

Year-long subscriptions to Autolib' will cost €144 (\$190), while daily and weekly subscriptions will also be available for €10 and €15

(\$13-\$20) respectively. An additional fee of around €5 (\$6.60) will be charged for every half-hour of driving.

The money will go to the Bolloré Group, the family-owned industrial holdings company behind Autolib', which hopes to have 3000 Bluecars circulating on the streets of Paris and its inner-ring suburbs by next northern summer.

The City of Paris has contributed €35 million (\$46m) to the scheme by building rental stations.

Suburban local authorities have also contributed €50,000 for each station.

The Bolloré group has so far invested €100 million in the project, hoping that by unclogging the streets of Paris and by giving visitors a taste of driving an all-electric car, they will create a platform for selling their technology outside of France.

France24 says the company has left little to chance.

Some 1200 multilingual "ambassadors" have been hired to answer customers' calls via video screens at parking stations as well as in the cars themselves.

The Autolib' vehicles will be constantly tracked and monitored from the operational centre, which will be staffed 24 hours a day.

France24 says the Bluecar has the functional look of a well-conceived public transport utility.

However, it was designed and manufactured by Italian firm Pininfarina, the company responsible for sculpting Ferraris and Maseratis, as well as many trains and tram systems in France.

Time will tell if the environmental benefits, noise reduction, zero emissions, relieving congestion around town, make Autolib' and the Bluecar's battery technology a genuine long-term success that can be exported around the world.



# Britain's child migrants history

Immigration Museum, 400 Flinders Street, Melbourne

**On their own** – Britain's child migrants reveals a largely untold chapter of migration history – that of British children who were sent to Australia and other Commonwealth countries under government-endorsed child migration schemes from the 1860s through to 1967.

As many as 7,500 British children came to Australia as part of the schemes. "Few of the children were actually orphans; their situations varied greatly," said Kim Tao, Exhibition Curator, Australian National Maritime Museum. "The official government reason for placing children throughout the Commonwealth was to improve their lives and increase the population

of 'good British stock' and labour in the colonies. Boys were expected to become farmers and girls were expected to become domestics or wives on the land."

When the children arrived in Australia they were the responsibility of either State or Federal governments and were taken to remote farm training schools and religious institutions where they were subject to a range of experiences, which had many and varied effects on the children.

While some children had better experiences and opportunities than others, the migration schemes are now largely recognised as flawed social policy. They were officially ended in Australia in 1967. ♦



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# JFK's words ring true



Fifty years ago in his inaugural address, President John F Kennedy posed a challenge to the people of the United States of America.

It was simple and yet profound. He said, "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country."

The simplicity of the statement was that it challenged people to take responsibility for their lives, and the profoundness of it was that when individuals collectively have this attitude, great things happen.

In the 35 years that I have been in the taxi industry I have seen remarkable changes. In 1986 when you ordered a cab you got four wheels and four seats. The odd five-seater was available but generally every cab was a Ford Falcon with the only difference being the colour. These days we have executive vehicles, high occupancy vehicles with up to 10 pax capacity, wheelchair accessible vehicles, hybrid vehicles and conventional vehicles.

Through all these changes one thing has remained the same and that is the need to provide high-quality service to our customers. Not just service that is the

bare minimum, but service which makes people want to use us again.

I believe service is a choice. We can treat people like cattle and grunt at them, or we can greet them with a smile and put them at ease. We can hop out promptly and help them with their bags, or we can sit and watch them struggle. We can drive with heavy accelerations, or we can drive smoothly. We can drive around in a dirty car, or we can take 15 minutes and clean it. Both approaches will get the passenger to where they want to go but which would I prefer if I were the passenger?

Ask yourself this fundamental question. What business are we really in? I would put it to you that we are in the 'customer service' game and not merely the 'taxi' game. This is not about semantics but rather, an attitude and state of

mind.

The greatest ambassador that a city can have is a reliable, punctual and customer-focused taxi industry. It costs nothing more to drive with a customer focused attitude but it does cost our industry's public image plenty when we do not, and that means dollars.

I would like to challenge everyone to continue to develop an attitude of customer service excellence, whether you are a veteran with 50 years experience or have only recently entered the industry. Individually and collectively we can make a difference to our customers and ourselves.

So what has this got to do with John F Kennedy's speech? Everything!

from **Bruce Erwin - Yellow Cabs** ♣

# Scienceworks without kids

Saturday 5 November 7pm – 10pm

Ever wanted to relive your childhood visits to Scienceworks, or visit the interactive museum without having to contend with children for a turn at racing Cathy Freeman? Saturday night on November 5 will give you the chance to experience Scienceworks as you've never seen it before – strictly 18+ only!

Big Kids' Night Out is a special event designed to encourage adults who may not normally come to Scienceworks to experience the science museum in an after-dark environment.

Visitors on the night will be able enjoy interactive exhibitions such as Explore-a-saurus and Sportsworks, take part in science demonstrations, learn about the science of wine and experience a celestial mind trip through our galaxy in the Melbourne Planetarium, hosted by Astronomer Dr Tanya Hill.

"The concept of Big Kids' Night Out is to provide adults the chance to tap into their inner child and let them have a bit of fun," said Frances Haire, Science Program Manager, Scienceworks.

"Scienceworks is nearly 20 years old, so an evening event is the perfect chance for people who came as children to relive that memory – or for those who have never visited Scienceworks to come and experience it for the first time. " ♣



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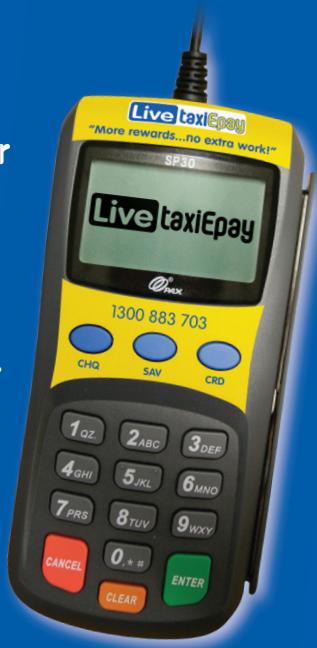


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