

Cathryn Cummins
Principal Council Investigations Officer
Select Committee on the NSW Taxi Industry
Parliament House
Sydney NSW 2000

1 March 2010

Dear Ms Cummins

Re: Response to Questions Taken on Notice and Additional Comments

Whilst we made a joint submission to the NSW Taxi Inquiry with the Physical Disability Council of NSW, we have decided to answer the questions taken on notice separately, in accordance to who took the question on notice.

1. Whether there were some other extraneous factors operating at the time when the ACT lifting fees were released that led to an increase in satisfaction with response times?

At the time that the lifting fees were released, the ACT established waiting time targets for WATS and other taxis¹. This is the only other extraneous factor we could find.

2. A comparison of fees in all States

A comparison of fees in all States is outlined below:

- ACT has a lifting fee is \$10².
- Queensland does not have a lifting fee³.
- Northern Territory has a minimum of \$10 fare payable by the passenger.
- Western Australia has a lifting fee of \$10 when allocated through despatch service and \$7 when booked through a private arrangement⁴.
- Victoria has a lifting fee of \$14.20⁵.

¹ Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission, Report on ACT Public Transport, Accessible Infrastructure and Services

www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/.../rpt%20act%20dda.doc

² Ibid.,

³ Passenger Transport Division, Queensland Transport,

'An Action Plan to improve accessibility in the Queensland Taxi Industry' 10 April 2008, p. 8

www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/action_plans/.../QT%20Taxi.doc

⁴ Government of Western Australia, Department of Education, Taxi and Charter Vehicles

<http://www.transport.wa.gov.au/taxis/15179.asp>

⁵ Victorian Department of Transport, New wheelchair-accessible taxi measures

<http://www.taxi.vic.gov.au/doi/internet/vehicles.nsf/AllDocs/AC4BE18413BEC3B7CA25750D007F1D04?OpenDocument>

- South Australia has a lifting fee of \$5 on the condition that the passenger is picked up within 30 minutes⁶.
- Tasmania has a lifting fee between \$10 and \$16 depending on the location⁷.

3. Send review of Disability Standards for Public Transport 2002

Please find the Draft Report by the Allens Consulting Group on the Review of the Disability Standards for Public Transport 2002 attached.

4. Comment on the scheme that is operating in Victoria that offers loans to regional taxi operators with a view to increasing the wheelchair taxi numbers up to parity with regular taxis

In general terms, we support the subsidies provided to regional taxi operators in Victoria to replace old or purchase new multi-purpose taxis. We note the success of the scheme, given that as of 22 October 2009, 44 grants were approved to purchase these vehicles⁸. However, we are not in the position to provide further comment.

Additional Comments

We would like to advise the Committee that our statement regarding the London taxi fleet being fully accessible on page two of the transcript was a mistake of fact, as outlined by the research below. We apologise for this error and request that Hansard be amended accordingly.

There are two types of taxis in London: licensed taxis, also known as 'Black Cabs'; and unlicensed taxis, such as private hire vehicles or minicabs. The key difference between 'Black Cabs' and private hire vehicle is that a 'Black Cab' is a public passenger vehicle and is licensed to 'ply for hire' which means they can stand on taxi ranks or and be hailed on the street. On the other hand, private hire vehicles can only be booked in advance through an operator⁹.

There are approximately 20000 'Black Cabs' in London¹⁰. It is estimated that there are between 40000 and 60000 private passenger vehicles operating in London¹¹.

All licensed taxis (black cabs) are required to be wheelchair accessible as part of their licensing agreement (although their 'level of accessibility' for all passengers with disability are currently being reviewed.)¹². However, unlicensed taxis are not required to be wheelchair accessible.

⁶ Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission, Time to Respond, Raising Equality for person with a disability using taxi services (November 2007), p. 36

⁷ ACT Department of Urban Development, WAT Reference Group Secretariat, Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Reference Group Report, September 2005, p. 36

⁸ Victorian Department of Transport, Taxi Accessibility
<http://www.transport.vic.gov.au/DOI/Internet/vehicles.nsf/AllDocs/D303C009722F53D5CA257566007C5BD5?OpenDocument>

⁹ Barbara Noble and Paul O'Hare, Transport Statistics Personal Travel Division, Travel by taxi and private hire vehicles (January 2009) p. 1

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgt/statistics/datatablespublications/personal/articles/article4travelbytaxiandminicab>
Ibid., p. 3

¹¹ Ibid., p.2

¹² The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, Door to Door: a travel guide for disabled people,
<http://dptac.independent.gov.uk/door-to-door/08/index.htm#08>

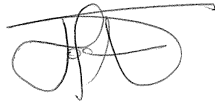
Consequently, only some of these vehicles are wheelchair accessible¹³. A licensing system for private vehicle hire is being introduced under the *Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998*. Operator licensing began in 2001 and licensing of drivers and vehicles will be rolled out in the near future¹⁴.

In summary then we urge the NSW government to put in place measures to ensure the gradual introduction of a universally accessible fleet in NSW, and note that steps taken in London should provide some guidance as to how this may occur.

Yours Sincerely



Fiona Given
Policy Officer, DDLC



Joanna Shulman,
Director/Principal Solicitor, DDLC

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Barbara Noble and Paul O'Hare op. cit., p. 3