

Top End Commercial Passenger Vehicles Forum Minutes

Date: 27 November 2017
Time: 1:30 pm to 3 pm
Venue: 2nd Floor Karlu Room, Energy House, 18-20 Cavenagh Street, Darwin

1. Meeting Attendance

Present

- Ron Fleming (Chair) Industry Representative – Private Hire Car and Limousine
- Trevor Cox Tourism Top End
- Ross Robertson Industry Representative – Motor Omnibus
- Glen Murray Industry Representative – Motor Omnibus
- Bill Piantoni Industry Representative - Minibus
- Greg Turner Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
- Bernie Ingram Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
- Simon Gillam Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
- Laura Fletcher Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics
- Poppy Zaronias Secretariat

Apologies

- Drosso Lelekis City of Darwin
- Melina Pachos Industry Representative – Taxi
- David Hannon Industry Representative – Motor Omnibus
- Des Crowe Australian Hotels Association NT
- Sarah Andrews Australian Hotels Association

2. General Business

2.1 Confirm Minutes from Previous Meeting

Greg Turner apologised on behalf of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics for not having sent members minutes from a previous meeting and will be distributed at a later date.

2.2 Previous Action Items

The group unanimously accepted the minutes from the previous meeting would be distributed at a later date.

3. New Business

3.1 Taxi Industry Representative – Taxi Council of the NT and Katherine Region

The group confirmed there is a need to have an additional Taxi Industry Representative to represent the other regions on the forum. It was suggested that a representative be invited from the Katherine and/or Gove region.

It was also suggested that a representative from the Taxi Council be extended an invite.

Action Item: The Department to contact Katherine and Gove taxi networks and the Taxi Council to discuss representatives.

3.2 Changes to the Commercial Passenger Vehicle (CPV) ID Card Requirements

The Department tabled a revised Information Bulletin for discussion and advised that the Information Bulletin would be available from 1 December 2017.

The Department advised that:

- A trial of the CPV ID card method of training was conducted during 2017.
- The trial moved away from a regulated training method, authorising Communications and Dispatch Networks to conduct driver training and endorsement of drivers wanting to obtain a CPV ID Card.
- The new method of training will be implemented in full and the trial end.
- If the Department believes that a driver's training did not meet the recommendations, Inspectors will contact the endorsing officer to establish what steps were taken to ensure that the driver had the necessary skills required to drive a CPV.
- Provisional ID cards will be discontinued.
- New drivers will be issued a 'Conditional' ID card by the Network responsible for their training.

The Minibus Representative advised that the new training initiative was beneficial and that the driver training was appropriate to the minibus industry.

The Department also advised that a few changes have been proposed for the CPV ID card that will come into place when Rideshare commences in the Northern Territory. These include changes to:

- The person's age limit for applying to be a rideshare driver from 21 to 18 years and six months.
- Simplifying the process to obtain a Private Hire Car, Limousine and Courtesy Vehicle licence.
- Inclusion of a table to assist persons with understanding minimum requirements needed for each card.

The Department asked if there were any more questions in relation to ID cards.

The Minibus Representative asked what would happen if a driver breached the conditions of their ID Cards.

A suggestion was made to put the company the driver is working for on their ID cards.

The Department responded and noted that card details were unfortunately limited and putting a company name on it was not possible.

The Minibus Representative advised that he had withdrawn support from three drivers who were not considered to be suitable for driving a CPV. He will continue to ensure that all drivers operating on his Network are suitable to drive minibuses.

3.3 Substitute Taxi Operations and Multiple Purpose Substitute Drivers

The Department advised that:

- A driver of a wheelchair substitute taxi (that was substituting for a standard taxi) was reported to have refused to provide a priority service to passengers in a wheelchair. As a result the relevant information bulletin has been updated to ensure drivers understand that if they are driving a wheelchair taxi, regardless if they are acting as a sub they must provide a priority service.
- Approvals for substitute taxis to operate independently in Alice Springs for major events such as the Masters Games, Christmas, and ANZAC Day is being reviewed and may cease.

The Department provided the following clarification regarding Rideshare:

- The new levy system applies to the primary taxi vehicle.
- It is a requirement under the new reform for operators to pay for each trip that occurs in their vehicle including any trips that occur in substitute vehicles that operators are using while one of their vehicles is unavailable.
- The substitute commercial vehicle licence (CVL) is not responsible for paying the levy fee for the primary vehicle (unless the primary vehicle is theirs).
- With the introduction of ridesharing the requirement to operate substitute vehicles may not be relevant as the extra demand may be met by this new transport option.

The Minibus Representative questioned the effects ridesharing would have on minibuses and taxis, mainly with the fees and how the system would come into place so it all blends in well together, though he was adamant the fees were not fair, and had a few negative issues with the new service.

The Minibus Representative also raised that there was no provision for substitute minibuses. The Department advised that substitute taxis were covered in the Act and that there was currently no provision for substitute minibuses.

The Department also advised that with the introduction of the CVL fees it would be more affordable to have an additional minibus available to substitute a minibus that was unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Department also advised that there was no date identified to revise the Act and that if any revision occurred it would take between one and two years.

3.4 New CPV Regulatory Reform Model

The Department advised that regulations have been drafted to accommodate rideshare services. These regulations are expected to come into place on 1 December 2017.

A summary was provided on Stage 1 of the CPV regulatory reform model being:

- CPVs will be able to display third party advertising. It was noted that ridesharing vehicles must not display advertising that identifies that as a rideshare vehicle.
- Codes of conduct and vehicle maintenance standards for all point-to-point transport services will come into place on 1 December 2017.
- The Northern Territory Lift Incentive Scheme has been expanded to all point-to-point services if they choose to enter into that area.

- Online application forms are now available for new rideshare drivers, including existing 'h' endorsement holders can also apply to be a rideshare driver. Applications to renew CVLs are also available.
- Communications and Dispatch Network conditions have been reviewed. All Networks are required to submit applications to operate a Communications and Dispatch Network prior to 1 December 2017. The Department will continue to work with Networks to assist them with meeting their requirement to provide the required supporting documentation.

Stage 2 of the CPV regulatory, commencing early February 2018 includes:

- Ridesharing transport services will commence operating in the Northern Territory.
- CVL fees will be significantly reduced.
- A per trip levy will be introduced.
- The Department is waiting on Ministerial direction in relation to the timing of a taxi fare review.

3.5 MPT Working Group

The Department advised it will reconvene the MPT Working Group, noting that there have been complaints that the multiple purpose/wheelchair taxi service is not adequate.

4. Other Business

4.1 Database Update

The Department is currently trialling a database to record public complaints/feedback. This system will allow the Department to better collate information and address any issues.

4.2 Parliamentary Inquiry into Subleasing of Taxi Licences

The inquiry has been completed and it was found that subleasing is legal, however it is not in the public interest.

The NT Government now has six months to respond on the inquiry recommendations.

4.3 Number of CPV Compliance Officers

Members of the forum advised that they believe that there needs to be an increase in the number of inspectors as two inspectors cannot audit all areas.

Action Item: The Department advised that it would be raised with the Executive Director.

5. Next Meeting

The next Forum meeting will be scheduled for April 2018.

MEETING CLOSED: 2:47 PM