

## FROM THE CEO

### THE MAIN EVENT

I hope everyone is well rested after the Festive Season break and ready for what is shaping up to be another big year for the taxi industry.

2009 reset the benchmarks for the accreditation of industry sectors and the requirements in regard to Business Service Standards, vehicle safety and presentation requirements, and compliance activity. We also saw the plans laid out for new and additional cameras and the release of 530 additional licences into the greater Melbourne area during 2010.

During 2009 there was a shakeout and rationalization of how the VTA interacts with Government on the one hand and the industry on the other. Of great assistance in this was the input from the operator and driver consultative committees, and the direct liaison with urban and country operators and networks.

This input crystallized the boundary between what are policy/strategic matters and what are operational/process matters. It also showed the crossover points between the two and, importantly, where the interfaces need to be within the industry itself and between industry sectors and Government sectors.

No doubt 2010 will bring new pressures on industry sectors, particularly in regard to VTD accreditation audits, ongoing compliance, and performance standards compliance. It is expected that there will be significantly more to come on service delivery, particularly short trips and for those in wheelchairs.

For the VTA the main events in 2010 will be finding ways to:

1. Re-shape the taxi licence assignment regulatory and operational framework;
2. Improve the ability of the industry to provide WAT services (including urban and country areas); and
3. Increase taxi use, hence occupancy.

The first goes to the very heart of the difficulties being encountered by the metropolitan taxi industry and requires strong Government intervention, the second requires Government to respond quicker and more in line with the needs of the country community, and the third is a state-wide matter that requires industry action and a shift in attitude and performance.

The potential of a shortage of drivers is of concern to the VTA. This could require a re-think of how taxi driving is marketed and administered.

The VTA has to take care not to be overly distracted by things that can't or won't be changed, things that really do need to be changed/updated, and those things which should be done irrespective of whatever excuses are made for not doing them but are required to be done as part of being in business.

The effort has to be placed in coming up with solutions to major issues, not moping and grumbling about the consequences of past and lawful decisions made by others – except of course where the law is clearly an ass.

Neil Sach  
VTA CEO