



VTA TRANSMISSION

EDITION 14, DECEMBER 2011

CEO's Welcome

2011 has been a tough year for most people in the taxi industry. New rules, tougher training requirements, the Taxi Industry Inquiry, no fare increase since December 2008, and driver shortage have all contributed to uncertainty and destabilization.

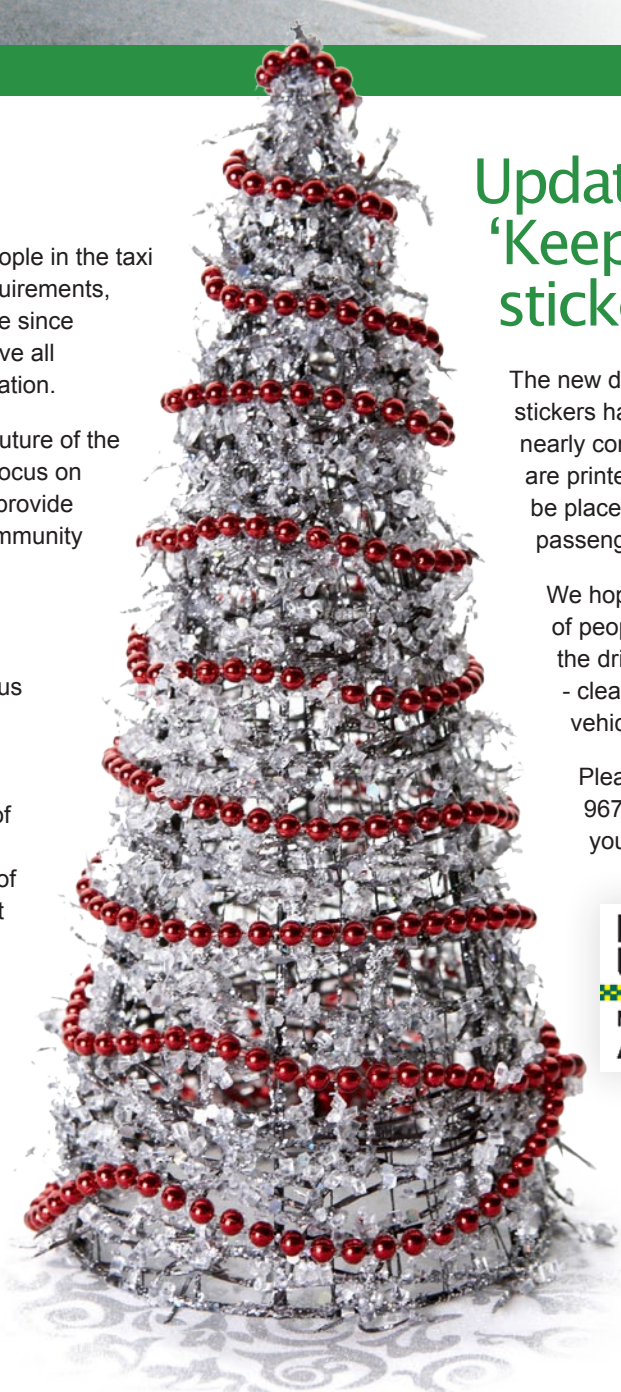
2012 is shaping up to be critical for the future of the Victorian taxi industry. It is vital that we focus on our customers and continue to strive to provide the level and standard of service the community is satisfied with.

As an industry we need to get back to the basics of reliability, consistency and profitability. 2012 will see a renewed focus by VTA in developing initiatives with the industry that produce improved service delivery outcomes for our all customers. Our focus must be removing instances of short fare refusal from our industry and ensuring the most vulnerable members of the community continue to receive a first class service.

Finally, let me congratulate you all for producing another quarter of improved customer satisfaction results. While we still have some way to go to satisfy our own expectations, all indications are that we are heading in the right direction.

I wish everyone a safe and happy festive season.

Neil Sach | VTA CEO



Update on 'Keep a lid on it' stickers

The new double-sided 'Keep a Lid' on it stickers have arrived and distribution is nearly complete. This year the stickers are printed on both sides and should be placed in the inside of the front passenger door window.

We hope these help with the issues of people drinking in taxis and make the driver's environments - their cars - cleaner and safer. Every member vehicle will receive a sticker.

Please contact Georgia on 9676 2635 if you don't have yours yet.



Update on changes at to the Melbourne Airport Forecourt.

Melbourne Airport Update

Melbourne Airport's forecourt (the area immediately out front of the terminal building) is undergoing a redevelopment and the first stages of the project are underway.

Under the new arrangements, pre-booked taxis are expected to park in the Melbourne Airport Short Term Car Park. VHA vehicles have been given an area solely for their use with over 70 spaces.

The VTA understands and shares the frustration of drivers who are not happy with this situation and realise it makes providing a service to Melbourne Airport's passengers very difficult. Pre-booked customers, be they business, outside of metropolitan Melbourne or disabled, no longer have any certainty as to where their taxi will be waiting for them.

The VTA is working closely with drivers and Melbourne Airport to find a practical solution. We will continue to urge the airport to have an area where pre-booked customers can be collected centrally and WATs vehicles can load wheelchair bound passengers.



Taxis in Regional Victoria – Holiday Surcharge (\$3.70)

The VTD advised the operators of vehicles licensed as urban (Geelong, Ballarat & Bendigo) taxi-cabs and country taxi-cabs (excluding those licensed to operate in the Outer-suburban taxi-cab zone) that they are required 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).

It is important to note that the normal late night fee is not a surcharge, and therefore the normal bailment fee conditions apply.

LPG Excise

On 1 December 2011 the first tranche of excise on LPG came into effect. This first tranche of 2.5 cents per litre will be followed by a further 2.5 cents per litre on 1 July 2012, then successive increases of 2.5 cents on 1 July each year until an excise of 12.5 cents per litre is reached.

For the taxi industry, the first tranche will result in additional fuel costs (full year equivalent) of: for a taxi travelling 80,000km pa (say, a small town country taxi) around \$400-00, and for a taxi travelling 160,000km pa (say, a double shifted metropolitan or urban taxi) around \$800-00. These amounts will increase to \$800-00 and \$1,600-00 respectively on 1 July 2012.

The VTA has requested that a tripartite meeting involving the Government, the Taxi Inquiry and the VTA be held to address how this additional LPG excise can be catered for.

The received a response from the Inquiry stating that fare setting was the responsibility of the Minister and outside their purview. As this edition of Transmission went to print the VTA were still waiting to hear from the Minister on this important issue.

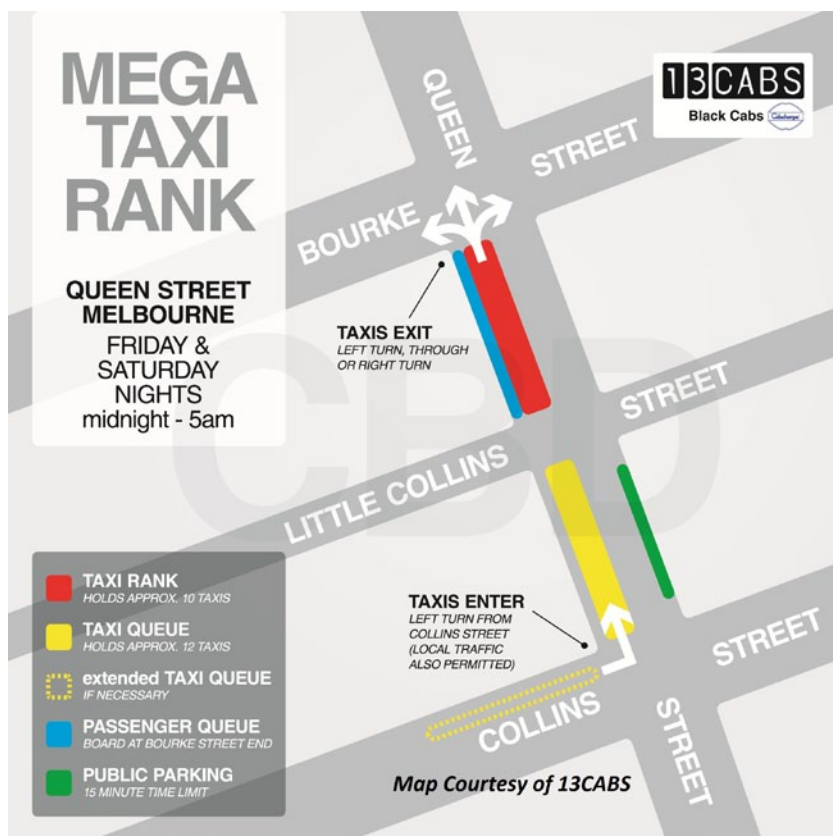
Fatigue Management

According to VicRoads, driver fatigue contributes to more than 25% of road crashes in Victoria, resulting in more than 60 deaths and 300-400 serious injuries each year.

Guidelines are being prepared by the VTD for discussion which are aimed at providing a framework for NSPs, taxi operators and drivers, and which amongst other things addresses fatigue management and hours of work.

The VTD believes that the guidelines when finalised will assist people to comply with their obligations under occupational health and safety laws which will come into affect over time.

The VTA recommends that NSPs, operators and drivers make sure they get a hold of the discussion guidelines when they are released.



Queen Street Mega Rank

The City of Melbourne officially opened the Queen Street Mega Rank on Friday December 2nd. The rank will be trialled for the next six months. The location of the rank was chosen due to the proximity of late night venues in the Queen Street precinct and the coverage of the area by CCTV.

During the opening weekend, the Police were present and they will continue to monitor this rank throughout the trial.

The number of taxis that serviced this rank increased dramatically from Friday to Saturday as drivers became familiar with the location and operation. It is hoped this trend will continue over the ensuing months.

The VTA encourages drivers to utilise this rank as it is well supervised by security and traffic control officers along with the Police as well as being well lit and promoted to city revellers.



Changes to Driver Accreditation, Application and Renewal Processes

From 5 December 2011, the VTD implemented changes to the application renewal processes for driver accreditation. Drivers will no longer be able to have applications or renewals processed on the spot at VicRoads offices across the state.

Both applications and renewals that are lodged at VicRoads offices will be forwarded to the VTD for assessment. When it has been assessed the accreditation certificate will be sent via the post, a process which may take up to 10 business days.

In the case of submitting renewals please ensure you do this at least 2 weeks before it is due to expire, to allow enough time for the application to be finalised before your current accreditation expires.

Applications and renewals will be accepted at the VTD office in person, located at level 23, 80 Collins St, Melbourne and will be processed on the spot.

The application forms for renewal of driver accreditation will be sent out 8 weeks in advance to allow sufficient time for processing. The VTD has also sent out notification to all country operators advising them that in urgent cases where the business will be impacted unduly they can contact the VTD directly to "fast track" the accreditation process and ensure a vehicle has an allocated driver.

Further to this, all non-metropolitan drivers will now be required to have photo identification cards displayed when driving a taxi. The VTD is in the process of visiting areas around the state and taking the driver photos. The identification card will then be sent to the driver at no charge. Drivers and operators will be informed of time and location in advance.

If you have any enquiries please contact the Victorian Taxi Directorate on 1800 638 802.

Cruise Ship Turnaround, Metropolitan Peak Service Taxi-Cabs

The VTD has authorised Metropolitan Peak Service Taxi-Cabs to operate on the times and days specified below and subject to the conditions specified below.

Dates:

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

Times:

Authorisation applies to taxi hirings that commence between the hours of 7.00 am and 3.00 pm on each of the dates specified above.

The Port of Melbourne Corporation's Cruise Ship Schedule indicates that cruise ships arrive at 7.00 am and depart at 4.00 pm on the dates specified above.

Conditions:

- (a) On the dates and during the times specified above, Metropolitan Peak Service Taxis are authorised to operate for the carriage of passengers from the Station Pier precinct, Port Melbourne;
- (b) Subject to (c) below, Metropolitan Peak Service Taxis will not be authorised to carry passengers from places other than the Station Pier precinct under this authorisation;
- (c) Despite (b) above, if a Metropolitan Peak Service Taxi has been hired for a journey from Station Pier and that same hirer subsequently requests the driver to undertake a return or extended hiring, including from a place the hirer was conveyed to on the initial journey, the driver may accept and fulfil that subsequent hiring; and
- (d) Metropolitan Peak Service Taxis are not authorised to undertake any street hire (rank/hail) or radio bookings during these extended hours other than as provided in (a) or (c) above.

Station Pier precinct

For the purposes of this notice, the Station Pier precinct is: Station Pier, Waterfront Place, and Beach Street, Port Melbourne, between Bay Street and Swallow Street, Port Melbourne. Operation of Peak Service Taxis during these extended hours is optional, not compulsory.



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