



Queensland Taxi Strategic Plan 2010-2015

A vision for the future and action plan
for the next 5 years

Tomorrow's Queensland:
strong, green, smart, healthy and fair



A message from the Honourable Rachel Nolan, Minister for Transport

Taxis form a critical part of the public transport network, providing flexible responsive 24 hour service at relatively little cost to the taxpayer.

In 2009, an estimated 90 million passenger journeys were undertaken by taxi compared to 60 million Citytrain trips and 127 million bus trips on the TransLink and regional *qconnect* networks.

For many people taxis are useful because they are readily available for getting around town. For some people, such as those with a disability or mobility problems, they provide an absolutely critical form of transport.

Ongoing Queensland Government research has shown that people want a taxi system that's affordable, reliable, responsive (not involving a long wait), safe and pleasant. While unlike other forms of public transport, government does not directly provide taxi services, it does have a critical role to play as an active regulator ensuring those community demands are met.

What's happened so far?

In recent years, the Queensland Government has introduced a number of initiatives to assist in meeting those standards, such as:

- The introduction of and ongoing commitment to secure taxi ranks at major entertainment precincts (\$1.78M in 2009 – 2010).
- Ongoing funding of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) to provide people with disabilities with a viable transport option with subsidies amounting to almost \$15M a year.
- Funding the installation of security cameras in Queensland taxis (\$8.3M).
- Funding the implementation and ongoing administration of the TSS smart card (\$3.5M to date).
- The Accessible Taxis for Queensland program that has made wheelchair accessible taxis available for use by Queenslanders in over 60 rural and remote centres (\$4.8M over three years).
- The introduction of the “Greening the Taxi Fleet” initiative, as part of the state government’s ClimateQ initiative.
- The creation of NightLink FlatFare taxis.

As a result Queensland taxi drivers and passengers now have a safer and more accessible system than ever before.

At present, waiting times for taxis in south east Queensland are the shortest they have ever been and the level of patronage suggests that taxis remain an affordable option. Nonetheless, community concerns have been expressed about a perceived deterioration in service quality and some drivers have complained to government that they are not being given a fair go in the workplace.



In response to those concerns, I established a taxi hotline to allow customers to report their experiences directly to government as well as “mystery shopper” surveys. In response to the quality issues raised, a Taxi Reform Package was announced in July 2009 including:

- The establishment of a Taxi Compliance Unit within the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR). The Taxi Compliance Unit has undertaken more than 105 compliance blitzes since September last year, some of them in partnership with the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs.
- The introduction of new driver standards requiring taxi drivers to be at least 20 years old and to have held an Australian driver licence for at least 12 months.
- The implementation, as soon as possible, of the National Taxi Driver Framework which includes a minimum English standard and a consistent National Training Package to be delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

What's next?

With high expectations to meet, neither government nor industry is standing still.

In late 2009 a Taxi Industry Advisory Committee (TIAC) was established to develop this Strategy to guide the taxi system through to 2015. The TIAC brought taxi companies, operators, drivers and customers to the table together for the first time.

Key elements of the Strategy include:

1. Taxis will provide better customer service and information.
 - In addition to the soon to be introduced National Training Standards, Queensland will introduce a requirement for photo ID and clear customer feedback phone numbers to be displayed in taxis to allow all passengers to report their good and bad experiences directly to taxi companies.
 - Government will make the successful 'mystery shopper' surveys a regular event.
 - Taxi response times will be published on the TMR's website on a quarterly basis.
2. A balance will be found between affordability and industrial fairness.
 - One of the key issues raised through development of the Strategy was some drivers' view that as bailees, rather than employees, they do not have the same industrial protections such as a minimum wage, access to superannuation and workplace dispute resolution practices as do other workers. These matters were the subject of an investigation by the independent Queensland Workplace Rights Ombudsman.
 - Government will progress legislative amendments to require all bailment arrangements to be contained in a signed agreement. This will ensure that drivers and operators have written proof of their agreements so that they can be legally enforced.
 - The Government will also release a Model Taxi Bailment Agreement and encourage operators and drivers to use this agreement to meet the requirements of the legislation which will be reviewed after three years. The Government will ensure aggrieved parties have a right of recourse through the Queensland Civil and Administration Tribunal.

3. New taxi service licences will be rolled out when and where they're needed.
 - Government plays a critical role by providing new taxi licences in response to demand. The state government has finalised a review of the Taxi Service Licence Model in order to ensure that the system which maintains a critical balance between quick response times and industry viability is modern and efficient.
 - Government has also created "shared zones" where the Brisbane taxi service area meets Ipswich and Redcliffe to improve taxi response times in those communities.
4. Taxi drivers, operators and booking companies will comply with requirements.
 - Government is keen to ensure that in its role of regulator, it holds industry members accountable for delivering the intended public benefits. TMR has allocated additional resources to taxi compliance from 1 July 2010.

I would like to thank members of the community for their feedback, members of the TIAC for their expertise and diligence and officers from TMR for their professionalism in putting together this Strategy to guide Queensland's taxi system into the future. I commend it to you.

Rachel Nolan MP
Minister for Transport
December 2010

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Strategic linkages

1. Setting the scene

Why we need a strategic plan

The demand for taxis is growing...

In 2009, Queensland taxis carried an estimated 90 million passengers – and the number is growing each year. By way of comparison, the Citytrain network in south east Queensland carries around 60 million passengers per annum.

... and changing.

Traditional taxi services remain an essential part of a balanced transport system. They provide flexible services, out-of-hours services and help a wide variety of Queenslanders stay mobile and connected to their communities. But the changing nature of the demand for taxis is reflected in the changing nature of the taxi system itself in recent years. Changes like new fare products and models of service delivery (NightLink FlatFare services, Council Cabs); new vehicle types (people movers, 'green' taxis); new technology (Taxi Subsidy Scheme smart cards, taxi security cameras); and policy and regulatory enhancements have altered the traditional view of taxi services.

Queensland's Taxi Industry

As at 30 September 2010 there are 3,253 taxis operating in Queensland with the licences to operate these taxis being owned by 2,881 individuals and companies. 632 or 19.4% of taxis are wheelchair accessible, giving Queenslanders the most accessible taxi fleet in Australia.

Security cameras have been installed in the vast majority of taxis throughout Queensland and secure taxi ranks in entertainment precincts provide additional security measures for passengers and drivers.

Over 15,000 people hold authorisation to drive taxis in Queensland.

So too is the strategic environment...

The strategic challenges facing the transport system at large are well known and documented in other departmental and whole-of-government strategies like Toward Q2. They include:

- a rapidly growing and even more rapidly ageing population
- a growing economy
- increasing costs in a context of tight fiscal constraint
- the need to transition to a low carbon future
- high government and public expectations.

There are also opportunities to be taken advantage of, in the growing and changing demand for taxi services, the changes in the urban environment, new and emerging technologies and so on.

To achieve our vision of a high quality and sustainable taxi system for everyone...

The Queensland Government needs to ensure that the taxi system improves in a sustainable way.

When compared with our interstate counterparts and internationally, Queensland has a well-performing, safe and viable taxi system. But further improvement is needed to address current stakeholder concerns and to meet the future challenges. We need to plan ahead and continue to work closely with our stakeholders to improve the taxi system into the future.

...we need a plan to guide the way.

Simply put, a strategic plan helps us understand where we want the taxi system to be in the future and how we're going to get there. For consumers and other purchasers of taxi services, this plan tells them what government will be doing to ensure that the taxi system continues to deliver the services that they want, when they want them, to a standard and a value to their satisfaction. For taxi industry stakeholders, this plan spells out the future direction for the taxi system, with a clear set of objectives and initiatives for the industry to plan against and to respond to and outlines how this is to be done on a sustainable basis. For TMR, this plan will inform taxi policy development and guide better decision making into the future.

The result will be a taxi system where all stakeholders will know the future direction, objectives, strategies and initiatives that will guide the system to 2015 and beyond.

How we developed the plan

The Queensland Taxi Strategic Plan was developed over a period of 12 months starting with the establishment of the TIAC in September 2009 as a consultative mechanism to guide the development of the plan. To develop the plan, we:

- consulted widely with industry stakeholders holding dozens of meetings with taxi drivers, taxi companies, operators and licence owners
- listened to feedback from the community gathered via the taxi hotline
- analysed what's going on in the industry – how it operates and what are the main issues and opportunities facing the industry
- engaged with the key stakeholders internal to TMR and plugged into the environmental scanning and other strategic policy and planning processes taking place internal to the department
- took account of the strategic priorities of the Queensland Government as articulated in key documents like Toward Q2 and ClimateQ
- established a vision and objectives
- identified initial strategies and actions to achieve the vision
- released a draft of the plan in May 2010 and invited community and industry feedback to the draft plan by way of written submissions
- considered the Report on Investigation into the Taxi Industry in Queensland by the Queensland Workplace Rights Ombudsman
- reviewed and amended the plan on the basis of the submissions received from the consultation process and the endorsed Ombudsman's recommendations.

Taxi Industry Advisory Committee

In September 2009, TMR established the TIAC. The committee is made up of TMR representatives and a representative sample of the Queensland taxi industry including drivers, operators, owners, peak bodies and representative groups.

Committee members are:

- CEO, Taxi Council of Queensland – Blair Davies
- SEQ taxi booking company representative – Bill Parker, Yellow Cabs
- Regional Queensland taxi booking company representative – Layne Gardiner, Black and White Cairns and Max McBride, Capricorn Coast Taxis
- Cab Drivers Association of Queensland representative – Lee Simms
- Independent taxi driver – Adam Cole
- Independent taxi operator – Greg Collins
- Transport Workers Union of Australia representative – Amanda Rigby
- Ethnic Council of Queensland representative – Mustafa Ally
- Disability Services Queensland representative – Paul Larcombe
- Queensland Taxi Advisers Incorporated – John Rahilly

Where the plan fits in

The linkages between this strategic plan and other high-level departmental and whole-of-government strategies and plans which inform and shape the public transport task are mapped at Attachment A. Specifically, the plan is a key supporting strategy to *Moving People – Connecting Communities: A Passenger Transport Strategy for Queensland 2006 – 2016*, the Queensland Government's overarching strategy for people movement in Queensland¹.

¹ <http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Travel-and-transport/Public-transport/Passenger-transport-strategy.aspx>

Role of taxis in Queensland's transport system

Why taxis matter

Taxi services are available on demand: anytime, anywhere, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. As such, they are the most flexible and available elements of the public transport system. Taxis are also the primary mode of passenger transport for many people for whom mainstream public transport is not an option, such as the frail aged and people with disabilities. And because of the distinctive attributes of the taxi system – smaller vehicles, door-to-door service provision, booking and dispatch capability – taxis lend themselves to a range of other passenger transport uses besides the provision of straight taxi services, including operating as a fully integrated component of the mainstream public transport system itself.

The taxi system

Taxis operate within a system as well as a market. The core elements of the taxi system are:

- regulatory framework (Operator Accreditation and Driver Authorisation, market entry restrictions, taxi licences, booking company service contracts, maximum fares, Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS))
- governance arrangements (TMR as regulator, Taxi Industry Advisory Committee (TIAC), Strategic Planning Committee (SPC), Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Reference Group, Taxi Industry Health and Safety Committee (TIHSC))
- technological platform (booking and dispatch systems, taxi meters, GPS, security cameras, in-vehicle EFTPOS/credit card facilities, Taxi Subsidy Scheme smart cards)
- physical infrastructure (call centres, vehicles, depots, ranks, secure ranks)
- industry stakeholders (investors, owner-operators, drivers, booking companies, taxi management companies)
- bailment agreements.

Bailment Agreements

Bailment describes a legal relationship in common law whereby physical possession of personal property is transferred from one person (the 'bailor') to another person (the 'bailee') who subsequently holds possession of the property. In the taxi industry, bailment agreements are used as the basis of the business relationship between taxi owners and taxi drivers. Taxi bailment agreements take the form of a 'bailment to hire' under which the taxi driver promises to pay the taxi owner an agreed percentage of the takings or a set pay-in (where the taxi driver pays the owner a fixed amount regardless of takings). The use of bailment agreements is considered to be crucial to the commercial viability of the taxi system.

Role of government in regulating the taxi system

The regulatory framework

There are three levels to the regulatory regime for taxi services established under the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* (TOPTA):

- Industry regulation
- Economic or market regulation
- Consumer regulation.

As for the passenger transport industry as a whole, TOPTA uses the regulatory instruments of Operator Accreditation and Driver Authorisation to prescribe minimum standards for the taxi industry in areas like customer service, operational safety and vehicle maintenance, and driver qualifications and training as well as to ensure that all participants in the industry are fit and proper persons. Other regulatory provisions set additional standards for vehicles in regard to equipment levels, vehicle type and age, cleanliness and comfort.

From an economic or market regulation perspective, TOPTA establishes a regulatory regime that:

- empowers TMR to fix the number of taxi licences within each declared taxi service area to match demand and to set maximum taxi fares
- requires taxi operators to be at the disposal of a taxi booking service when not otherwise hired (unless exempted)
- holds taxi booking companies accountable for their performance via a regime of taxi administration service contracts.

In recognition of the high cost of taxi travel to dependent users, TOPTA establishes the TSS to subsidise the cost of taxis for people with severe mobility impairments.

Finally, TOPTA contains provisions that regulate consumer behaviour in areas like fare evasion, obeying lawful directions and the smoking and the consumption of food and beverages in vehicles.

Taxi Subsidy Scheme

The TSS is designed to assist the mobility of people with severe disabilities within a set eligibility criteria. The Scheme provides a 50% subsidy to a maximum of \$25.00 for each trip on the full cost of a taxi fare. There are approximately 46,000 TSS members and the Scheme's budget for the 2009/2010 financial year was almost \$15 million.

Applying the framework



2. Vision, principles, outcomes and strategies

Our vision is for Queensland to have...

*...the **safest**, **best performing**, **most customer-focussed** and **sustainable** taxi system in Australia.*

Making the vision a reality

We have listened to industry representatives and customers to identify six overarching principles for the taxi system in Queensland. We have then identified the key strategies to deliver the matching 2015 outcomes and detailed the specific actions to be taken to deliver upon the strategies in a separate, comprehensive action plan. The strategies and actions in this plan are over and above business as usual.

Principles

Safe	Taxi services will be safe
Reliable	Taxis will be available for everyone: where they want them, when they want them
Accountable	Booking companies, operators and drivers will be held accountable for their performance
Customer-focussed	Taxi services will offer high quality and value for money services
Commercially viable	The taxi system will be financially viable on a commercial basis
Green	Taxis will be energy efficient and have a low carbon footprint

Outcomes and Strategies

A safe system

The taxi system in Queensland should be safe for everyone who uses it or works within it delivering services to the public. The safety of the system should not be a barrier to people choosing to use taxis or seeking employment in the taxi industry or to enjoying the experience when they do.

Outcome

...people will feel safe using taxis

A person getting into a taxi is entitled to feel personally safe and to expect that the taxi driver is competent, the vehicle is safe and, in the event that an incident occurs, that appropriate technological and system safeguards are in place and functioning.

Taxis consistently rate highly in terms of safety and security in the quarterly public transport customer satisfaction surveys conducted by TMR. In the most recent survey for the June 2009 quarter, taxis rated the highest of all public transport modes along with ferries against this key performance indicator, with a score of 81 out of 100.

In recent times, however, there has been a growing concern in the community that a perceived decline in driving standards among some taxi drivers may be putting the travelling public at risk. This is reflected in the number of complaints to the Taxi Hotline relating to dangerous driving and supported by the findings from the ‘mystery shopper’ survey of taxi services conducted by TMR in July 2009 where 20 per cent of drivers were marked as not following general road rules.

Strategy

1. Improve and enforce driver competency standards and enhance passenger perceptions of safety

Actions

1.1 Introduce a requirement for all applicants of taxi driver authorisation to meet the National Minimum English Standard from November 2010.

The Australian Transport Council (ATC) comprising of federal, state and territory ministers agreed in November 2009 that each jurisdiction would implement a National Minimum English Standard for new taxi driver applicants. ATC endorsed this standard on 30 April 2010.

Implementation of this standard requires all new applicants of taxi driver authorisation to meet minimum levels in English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills before undertaking the training required to become a taxi driver. The assessment of these English standards will be undertaken by qualified assessors independent of the taxi industry.

- 1.2 Introduce a requirement for new applicants for taxi driver authorisation who will drive in major contracted areas to undertake training through a RTO and demonstrate competency in the national taxi driver training core competencies from January 2011.

In November 2009, ATC endorsed the eight national taxi driver competency units and agreed that each jurisdiction would implement these. The agreed units are:-

- Drive taxicab (TLIC907C).
- Use communications systems in a taxicab (TLIB9009A).
- Comply with safety and security procedures (TLIF7209A).
- Provide taxicab customer service to industry (TLII1909A).
- Carry out financial transactions and maintain records (TLIQ1609A).
- Complete induction to the transport industry (TLIL6009A).
- Identify major road, services and attractions (TLIH407B).
- Provide wheelchair accessible taxi services for passengers with disabilities (TLIC4009A).

Training in the new national competency units will require both on and off the job components to be delivered and assessed over a period of time. One way to lessen the effect of the new requirements on driver numbers will be to use provisional driver authorisation for a limited duration to enable new drivers to commence work in the taxi industry after completion of the off the job components of the training. Drivers would not be eligible to obtain full driver authorisation until they had completed the on the job components of this nationally accredited training and been assessed as competent by a RTO.

- 1.3 Introduce a requirement for ongoing professional development of taxi drivers following the introduction of new requirements for applicants of taxi driver authorisation.

To maintain taxi driver standards, a program of ongoing professional development for taxi drivers needs to be progressed. This work needs to take into account the RTO delivered competency based training for new taxi drivers when it is rolled out and needs to complement it. TMR will work with the taxi industry once the new requirements are in place.

- 1.4 Introduce a requirement for taxi drivers to display photographic identification and taxi industry contact details in taxis.

The introduction of a requirement for a taxi driver to display their photographic identification in a prominent position visible to passengers will give passengers confidence that the taxi driver is authorised by TMR. In addition there will be a requirement for customer feedback phone numbers to be clearly displayed in taxis to allow all passengers to report their good and bad experiences directly to the relevant taxi industry member.

- 1.5 Enhance fatigue management requirements for all taxi drivers.

Current contracts with taxi booking companies include the requirement that fatigue management procedures are in place for all affiliated drivers. The *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Standard 2010* also places an obligation on both operators and drivers to ensure that vehicles are not operated when fatigue levels may endanger passenger safety. Research will be undertaken to determine the factors influencing fatigue for taxi drivers with a view to regulating to reduce the potential for fatigue-related accidents involving taxi drivers.

Outcome

...people will feel safe working in the taxi industry

A taxi driver or a rank marshal is entitled to a safe working environment free from personal abuse and the risk of assault.

Although evidence produced by the number of taxi security camera downloads suggests that the number of assaults and incidents of abuse has remained relatively constant in total numbers over the past three years, driver safety was a common concern raised by the industry stakeholders consulted in the preparation of this plan.

Evidence from secure ranks indicates that as secure ranks become more popular, the number of assaults and incidents of abuse experienced by rank marshals and security guards is increasing.

Strategy

2. Improve driver safety

Actions

2.1 Examine the future direction for taxi security cameras with regard to effective legislation, policies and procedures, specifications and supply.

It is critical that safety equipment installed in vehicles such as taxi security cameras are in working order and that drivers, operators and taxi booking companies are clear about their roles and responsibilities in this regard. TMR also has a role to play to ensure appropriate checks are completed as part of the compliance process.

Some existing taxi security cameras have been in place for some time, so there is also a need to ensure that they are in working order so that drivers and passengers are protected.

TMR is currently undertaking a review of the specifications of the current systems to determine the minimum specifications for future technology. It is anticipated the review may include investigation of increased memory of the system, audio components, live streaming of footage and the amendment of legislation.

2.2 Review driver duress system and procedures.

The review of the driver duress systems and procedures is intended to ensure that the operational parameters around activating and responding to the duress systems are in place and effective. Technological developments in both in-car distress/duress systems and vehicle design also need to be monitored to accommodate the highest practical driver safety standards in the taxi system.

2.3 Work with the Queensland Police Service (QPS) to establish a Regional Taxi Liaison Officer in each QPS region in which taxis operate.

There is a substantial body of anecdotal evidence that many drivers do not report offences committed against them to police because:

- the process of reporting and providing evidence takes them off the road for too long, thus further reducing their earning capacity; and
- there is a perception in the taxi industry that penalties imposed upon people convicted of taxi-related offences are not severe enough.

2.4 Examine options for introducing mandatory ‘up-front’ fare payments where circumstances warrant (for example, late at night) to reduce fare evasion crimes against taxi drivers.

Another source of physical risk to drivers is unruly passengers refusing to pay the metered fare at the end of the trip. This is a particular risk with night-club patrons and the like late at night. Introducing a restricted system mandating the payment of an equitable up-front fare as a pre-condition to travel may be a way to reduce this risk.

Strategy

3. Improve the safety of secure ranks

Actions

3.1 Investigate improved safety options for secure ranks, including where additional ranks might best be sited.

TMR will continue to consult with the taxi industry to identify potential safety and infrastructure improvements at secure taxi ranks. Investigation into the use of personal distress systems, directional signage and improved access to police assistance will also be included. TMR will also work with the taxi industry and local councils to identify suitable sites for additional secure ranks where required.

3.2 Develop and implement an education campaign for the general public to enhance respect for front-line taxi workers.

Criminal or anti-social behaviour directed at taxi drivers, rank marshals and security guards cannot be tolerated. Evidence from other jurisdictions (Western Australia and Victoria) has shown that marketing campaigns can have a substantial effect in reducing harassment of front-line taxi workers.

In late 2009, TMR developed a Taxi Users Guide which was designed to explain the rights and responsibilities of taxi drivers and passengers. It details what is expected of a taxi driver and the passenger during the course of a journey. This Guide will be revised to include information about the roles and responsibilities of rank marshals and security guards to enable the public to understand those roles better and improve the interactions between all parties.

TMR will continue to work with the taxi industry to explore other viable options that would enhance respect for front-line taxi industry workers.

A reliable system

Reliability is a basic expectation of all taxi users. Moreover, the capacity of the taxi system to provide taxi services on demand, with minimum delay and on a reliable basis is fundamental to its role in the public transport network. So too is the imperative that taxi services be available on an equitable basis.

Outcome

...people will have reliable, timely and equitable access to taxis on demand

Only buses rate lower than taxis against the reliability key performance indicator in the most recent public transport customer satisfaction survey, with taxis scoring 52 on a scale of 1-100.

The key measure of the performance of the taxi system in this regard is response times. That is, how long an intending passenger has to wait having made a request for an immediate service from a booking company before a taxi arrives to pick them up.

For taxis to be available on an equitable basis involves more than the requirement that wheelchair users and others with a similar dependence on large mobility aids be able to access wheelchair accessible taxis wherever and whenever they want one. Federal legislation also dictates that the waiting times for users requesting wheelchair accessible taxis should be equivalent to the waiting times for other users.

Under TOPTA, TMR sets the number of taxi licences for each declared taxi service area. The single most important determinant of reliable waiting times for all taxi users, then, is the department's ability to strike and maintain the right balance between the number and mix of taxi licences within each taxi service area and the underlying demand for taxi services. Too few licences and waiting times will deteriorate. Too many licences and the underlying commerciality of the taxi system itself might be put at risk.

Other factors influence waiting times, too. The performance of booking companies, in particular the capacity of their booking and dispatch systems to cope with the demand, is another key determinant. Traffic conditions such as recurrent congestion also impact upon taxi waiting times and the waiting time benchmarks that TMR uses to monitor the performance of taxi booking companies need to be periodically reviewed to take such factors into account.

TMR's current methodology for reviewing and varying the number and mix of taxi licence numbers on a periodic basis lacks the transparency and responsiveness required in the current environment. To redress this situation, TMR has commissioned a consultancy to develop a new methodology and tools to use for this purpose (the Taxi Service Licence Model).

Strategy

4. Implement an improved model for reviewing and varying the number and mix of taxi licences on a periodic basis, including an improved process for issuing new taxi licences

Actions

4.1 Finalise a new Taxi Service Licence Model.

Developing a new Taxi Service Licence Model is the first step towards improving the capacity of TMR to maintain the right balance between the number and mix of taxi licences area by area and the underlying demand for taxi services. The Model provides TMR with an objective, robust and transparent approach for establishing a point estimate for the appropriate number of taxis. Once the Model establishes the number range of vehicles required and calculates the allocation between wheelchair accessible and conventional taxis, consultation at the local level occurs before the delegate determines the final number of additional licences to be released or declared excess.

The Model has the capacity to allow for updates of actual dependent variables (number of taxis, bookings per taxi, bookings per capita) and actual and forecast data for independent variables (population, employment, tourism, GSP, fare levels and car ownership). Once the data is updated, reviews and checks can be undertaken regularly with ease.

4.2 Review existing waiting time benchmarks area by area and develop benchmarks for taxi rank waiting times at key ranks.

Waiting time benchmarks which are a key input to the Taxi Service Licence Model have not been reviewed since they were first put into place in 1996. A new model for determining the number of taxi licences required to service an area provides a timely opportunity to review these critical benchmarks to ensure that they reflect the contemporary operating environment and consumer expectations. When reviewing benchmarks, TMR will consider the differences between taxi service areas as well as the locations of key ranks and timing and seasonal variations. This means that rank benchmarks will be established on a local basis using statistically sound longitudinal data.

4.3 Review the process for issuing new taxi licences to provide greater flexibility and certainty to government, the taxi industry and the public.

The process used to issue new taxi licences is just as important as the process for reviewing the number and mix of taxi licences to achieving the outcome of a reliable taxi system. Under the existing regulatory framework, new taxi licences can only be issued for purchase by public tender and, other than for the voluntary surrender of licences by current licence holders, there is no mechanism for reducing the total number of licences afoot in the event of a sustained decline in the demand for taxi services. This lack of flexibility, together with the high asset value of taxi licences under the current arrangements, is a significant barrier to new entrants to the taxi industry especially, but not solely, for existing drivers wanting to become owner/drivers.

The way in which the regulatory framework seeks to deal with this problem is to enable taxi licences, once purchased, to be leased by the licence holder to a third party willing to operate the licence. This has given rise to the practice of on-leasing or sub-leasing of leased licences to 'fourth' parties. This practice may introduce another layer of financial overheads into the taxi system and also adds an additional level of complexity into the regulation of the taxi industry.

However independent research undertaken by LEK Consulting found that sub-leasing through taxi booking companies provides industry stability in that owners have greater certainty around lease payments and booking companies have greater certainty about the numbers of taxis in their fleet which, in turn, stabilises affiliation fees for operators. Benefits also include more stable lease values and consequently a reduced likelihood that inexperienced operators would agree to excessive lease payments. While there is no intention to ban sub-leasing, ways to encourage active participation in the industry will be explored. For example, this might include alternate options to perpetual licences that will remove barriers to licence ownership and placing certain conditions on licences that will ensure active participation of licence owners in the industry.

The introduction of a peak demand taxi product may improve the capacity of government to be flexible in its response to changes in the demand for taxi services. The potential impact upon the value of existing licences and the financial viability of existing operators will need to be taken into account.

Strategy

5. Review of the number and mix of taxi licences on a state-wide basis

Actions

5.1 Conduct an immediate area by area review of the number and mix of taxi licences using the new Taxi Service Licence Model and waiting time benchmarks and implement the outcomes.

Once Actions 4.1 and 4.2 have been completed, an immediate one-off review of the number and mix of taxi licences across the state using the model will be undertaken.

5.2 Undertake subsequent periodic reviews in accordance with the prescribed timeframes.

One of the key features of the proposed Taxi Service Licence Model is that it groups the existing taxi service areas into three categories and specifies how often the areas within each category ought to be reviewed. Any new and/or revised processes for issuing new taxi licences as a consequence of Action 4.3 will be progressively implemented as and when they come into effect.

An accountable system

When a consumer purchases an inferior product or receives poor customer service in an open marketplace, they have the option of choosing a different product or going somewhere else next time around. But this is not necessarily the case for consumers in a restricted market. So when government chooses to restrict competition in a particular market in the public interest, as is the case with taxi services, it falls upon the regulator to ensure that the industry members benefiting from those market restrictions are held accountable for their part in delivering the intended public benefits.

Outcome

...the public can rely upon the Department of Transport and Main Roads as the taxi system regulator

TMR's performance as a regulator of the taxi system is dependent upon two inter-related considerations:

- The effectiveness of the regulatory framework itself.
- The department's capacity and capability to work within and enforce the regulatory framework.

Changes to individual elements of the regulatory framework for taxi services are implicit in a number of the other strategies identified in this plan. To the extent that overarching changes may also be required, a review of the regulatory framework in TOPTA as a whole is being progressed through the Passenger Transport Reform Program initiated by the department in late 2009.

While better placed than other Australian jurisdictions in terms of the industry data at its disposal, TMR is constrained as a regulator in its ability to identify and collect the full range of data that it requires to monitor industry performance and to act upon the data that it does collect. Improvements to both the regulatory framework and the department's capacity and capability as a regulator are needed to address this situation. Recent initiatives like the establishment of the Taxi Compliance Unit and the 'mystery shopper' survey are constructive steps in the right direction but more needs to be done on both fronts. In another development, TMR has engaged consultants to develop a data warehouse to automatically capture and store taxi booking company data together with an enhanced capability to analyse and report upon that data.

By making better use of better data, continually monitoring industry performance and enforcing the statutory obligations imposed upon booking companies, taxi operators and drivers, TMR is also better placed to implement system improvements in other areas.

Strategy

6. Improve TMR's data collection capacity, data sets and data management systems

Actions

6.1 Implement the data warehouse for taxi booking company data.

TMR is already committed to implementing a 'data warehouse' model to automatically capture, store and analyse data directly from the taxi booking companies themselves, with the immediate priority being the data necessary to monitor minimum service levels (MSL's) under the booking company service contracts. This data will not only enable TMR to better monitor the performance of individual taxi booking companies but also the performance of the whole taxi system, but only in relation to electronically requested/booked services in the first instance.

6.2 Develop a business case for expanding the data warehouse to incorporate all other industry data requirements.

Once the initial functionality of the data warehouse has been satisfactorily developed and implemented, consideration will then be given to expanding it to include the automatic capture, storage and analysis of data relating to ranked taxi services. This data is either already being collected or capable of being collected via taxi booking company ICT systems.

Strategy

7. Improve TMR's capability to analyse industry performance and to enforce industry compliance with performance benchmarks

Actions

7.1 Define the proposed key performance indicators in the Queensland Taxi Action Plan.

Key elements of the Queensland Taxi Action Plan are the proposed performance indicators against which progress towards the achievement of the desired outcomes of this strategic plan are to be measured. Currently these indicators are indicative only and so the first action that is necessary under this particular strategy is to firm these up.

7.2 Review and upgrade TMR's in-house data analysis tools.

7.3 Audit TMR's data and performance analysis skills and implement strategies to address any identified gaps.

The next step is to take action to ensure that TMR has the appropriate capacity and capability to monitor and enforce industry performance not just in terms of the achievement of the outcomes of the strategic plan but more broadly in regard to the regulatory framework at large.

7.4 Review the effectiveness of taxi administration service contracts, taxi licences and other regulatory instruments as performance management tools.

It is critical to ensure that the key regulatory instruments that comprise the regulatory framework are the most effective compliance tools. For example, licensing taxi booking companies rather than contracting with them would eliminate the need for TMR and taxi booking companies alike to go through a time-consuming and resource-intensive negotiation and offer/tender process to reissue the contracts each time they expire. The effectiveness of operator accreditation as a regulatory instrument also is arguably diminished by virtue of the fact that TMR has yet to promulgate the necessary protocols and procedures to enable taxi operators to become fully accredited.

Strategy

8. Improve the capacity of the taxi industry to monitor its own performance and ensure compliance

Actions

8.1 Develop an industry portal to provide on-line access to information and data to enable industry members to monitor and regulate their own performance.

8.2 Train industry members in the use of the industry portal to enable them to self-regulate.

The principal aim of the industry portal is to improve the capacity of the taxi industry to self-regulate. The portal will enable individual industry members (operators; drivers; taxi management companies) to access on-line information specific to their own performance management needs but not in relation to the performance of others. This would include the relevant departmental policies and guidelines and what the data warehouse and other government databases hold about their individual performance. Access to the portal will be controlled through individual log-on IDs and will be two-way, that is, the portal will provide TMR with the ability to communicate directly with individual industry members and vice versa.

A customer focussed system

Taxi service prices reflect the personalised nature of the service and so anything less than a high standard of service is simply not value for money. Customer service extends from the time a phone booking is taken or a rank marshal greets someone, to the comfort and cleanliness of the vehicle, to the manner and presentation of the driver, through to the experience had during the ride.

Outcome

...people will enjoy catching taxis

In the most recent public transport customer satisfaction survey, taxis outperform all other modes for comfort of ride and ease of use and rank second only to ferries on helpfulness of staff. The comparative low incidence of complaints relating to poor customer service received by taxi booking companies and TMR relative to the volume of taxi trips is further evidence of the generally high standard of taxis services. However as with safety, feedback to the Taxi Hotline and the findings of TMR's 'mystery shopper' survey suggest that driver related customer service standards may have slipped in recent times. Further, the one customer satisfaction key performance indicator that taxis don't rate well against is 'Information', where they score only 57 out of 100. Most consumers, for example, don't understand how taxi fare tariffs work or where to find the necessary information. Similarly, consumers are generally unsure of their rights as taxi users and how to seek redress when necessary.

Strategy

9. Improve and enforce driver customer service standards

Actions

9.1 Implement the Taxi Driver Standards Reform Package to improve customer service standards.

In addition to driver competency standards in relation to passenger safety (Action 1.2 refers), the national Taxi Driver Training Framework also includes competency units in relation to customer service. These include:

- Provide taxicab customer service to industry (TLI1909A).
- Carry out financial transactions and maintain records (TLIQ1609A).
- Identify major road, services and attractions (TLIH407B).
- Provide wheelchair accessible taxi services for passengers with disabilities (TLIC4009A).

9.2 Maintain the Taxi Hotline and 'mystery shopper' surveys.

9.3 Monitor customer satisfaction with taxi services on an annual basis.

To reinforce the implementation of these national standards, the other key focus under this strategy is to enhance TMR's capacity to monitor consumer satisfaction. TMR will increase the number of taxi customers surveyed each quarter as part of the passenger transport customer satisfaction surveys undertaken to better gauge customer satisfaction with taxi services

9.4 Undertake ongoing, targeted enforcement activities to ensure industry compliance.

To encourage and ensure industry compliance with all relevant standards and regulatory provisions, TMR will allocate additional resources to undertake increased taxi compliance activities.

Strategy

10. Improve the ability of customers to access comprehensive information about taxi services

Actions

10.1 Review existing information sources, and the availability, range and usefulness of existing information on taxi services.

The information that consumers are able to access and the ways in which they are able to do this influences their satisfaction levels with a service. Some individual taxi booking companies already include attractive features on their websites like on-line fare calculators and they also provide information about the specific taxi services they have on offer. However there is no ‘one stop shop’ that provides general information to consumers about taxi services, including the consumers’ rights and obligations and the requirements that TMR has of taxi industry members.

10.2 Develop and implement appropriate improvements, including publicity and marketing of the information services.

Providing consumers with access to the widest possible range of information about taxis, including their rights as taxi users, via the widest possible range of media will result not just in better informed consumers but better empowered consumers as well. For this reason, a key focus of this strategy will be to explore how social networking platforms and tools might be used to enable consumers to provide feedback on taxi system performance in real time while providing them with access to all the information they might require about taxi services, also in real time.

10.3 Publish taxi service levels.

Once the data warehouse is established, TMR will have direct access to taxi booking companies’ performance data. This data will be published on TMR’s website on a quarterly basis to provide taxi users with information about service levels in peak and non peak periods for both conventional and wheelchair accessible taxis.

10.4 Explore options to enhance transparency within the taxi system that may provide a public benefit.

Providing consumers with access to a wide range of information about taxis is considered to have a positive impact on the public and their subsequent use of taxis as a mode of transport. The proposal to publish service levels and other information is consistent with government principles of openness and transparency.

There are currently 3253 taxi service licences in Queensland and a large portion of these owners hold multiple licences. The Information Commissioner has advised TMR that the publication of taxi licence owner information may result in a more accountable, transparent system. Work is currently being undertaken to implement this register in April 2011. TMR will further explore options to better enhance transparency within the industry to regain public confidence.

Outcome

...people can afford to catch taxis when they need to

Affordability is the other dimension of value for money taxi services. Because of the fares charged by taxis, it is to be expected that taxis rank as the least affordable mode in the public transport customer satisfaction survey, with a score of 47 out of 100. However, the real concern in terms of the affordability of taxis is the risk that taxi services might become priced beyond the reach of most ordinary users, should taxi fares rise too sharply in the future.

Government is responsible for setting maximum taxi fares. Under current arrangements, taxi fares are reviewed on a six monthly basis based upon an industry cost model and, as a consequence, taxi fares tend to increase as costs increase. The taxi industry cost base itself is a variable, however, and there is scope to mitigate future taxi fare increases by taking measures to better control, even to reduce, industry costs.

Strategy

11. Investigate and implement options for reducing or better controlling taxi industry costs

Actions

11.1 Build on current research to develop a detailed and contemporary understanding of the taxi industry cost structure.

11.2 Identify and evaluate options for reducing/controlling industry costs and make recommendations to government.

TMR has a well developed understanding of the cost drivers built into the taxi industry cost model used to review taxi fares. These are labour, fuel, maintenance and cleaning, insurance, vehicle leasing charges and network fees and an allowance for the higher CPI in Brisbane. TMR will need to consider how more structural considerations like variations to the terms and conditions of bailment agreements are likely to impact upon taxi industry costs, and hence fares. Further detailed analysis is also required to understand how the cost drivers might be better controlled or even reduced over time with a view to limiting the extent of future fare rises. Options in this regard include improving the fuel efficiency of the taxi fleet (Strategy 14 also refers) and reviewing the reasonableness of affiliation fees.

11.3 Amend legislation to introduce a requirement for written signed bailment agreements and release and recommend the use of the Model Taxi Bailment Agreement (MTBA).

Over recent years, TMR has explored a number of options to resolve concerns regarding working relationships including the development of the MTBA and Industry Code of Practice. A written bailment agreement will provide an important evidentiary tool in circumstances where working arrangements are disputed and will provide a formal mechanism to increase transparency and accountability in the taxi industry.

TMR will progress amendments to TOPTA to require all bailment arrangements to be in a signed agreement including the date the agreement was formed, the operator's and driver's details including accreditation and authorisation numbers, what the driver will pay the operator per shift to bail the taxi, who will pay for fuel or, if sharing fuel cost, what percentage each party will pay, what personal accident and injury insurance the bailor has in place for the bailee and how this will be evidenced, and the amount and frequency of contributions a driver must make as a contingency against an insurance excess charge resulting from an at-fault accident. The legislation will be reviewed after three years.

11.4 Examine the reasonableness of affiliation fees.

The reasonableness of affiliation fees is being examined by TMR . This is being analysed in terms of value for money, jurisdictional comparisons and booking company returns for the 23 contract holders for taxi administration services. The work already completed in the Brisbane taxi service area suggests that the affiliation fees being charged by taxi booking companies are reasonable in that they provide good value for money and are in the range of affiliation fees observed in capital cities in other jurisdictions. Further analysis will be undertaken to assess the reasonableness of affiliation fees in other taxi service areas.

A commercially viable system

The taxi system functions without government subsidy but for the TSS (which is a user subsidy not an operational subsidy) and a small government contribution to the cost of secure taxi ranks. The commercial viability of the taxi system is fundamental to the system's financial sustainability.

Outcome

...the taxi system will be productive, efficient and sustainable

Taxi bailment agreements are central to the financial structure of the taxi system. Concerns about the working hours and conditions, remuneration levels and so on under a proportion of bailment agreements have led to the Ombudsman undertaking an investigation into the situation. The Ombudsman's report has some significant implications in terms of the ongoing commercial viability of the taxi system.

With the cost structure of the taxi system being a strategic focus under the 'customer focussed' element of this plan, the productivity of the taxi system is the other main consideration in terms of its financial viability. Productivity, in this context, refers to the extent to which the assets of the taxi system are being used to generate income for drivers, taxi operators and taxi booking companies alike. The higher the level of productivity, the more commercially viable the taxi system will be.

For the taxi system to have sufficient capacity to service periods of peak demand means that the system tends to have excess capacity off-peak. This spare capacity, in combination with the distinctive service attributes of the taxi system (smaller vehicles, flexible/door to door service provision, booking and dispatch capability), mean that taxis are in demand to provide a range of passenger transport services in markets other than the market for taxi services.

But the capacity for taxis to compete in this growing market on an unencumbered basis is constrained by the TOPTA regulatory framework which is designed to optimise the capacity of the taxi system to deliver immediate hire services on demand, as the default public transport mode. Freeing up the regulatory framework would improve the commercial viability of the taxi industry by optimising its capacity to generate income from the provision of these sorts of flexible, small vehicle services – or what might be termed 'micro transit'. Care will need to be taken, however, to ensure that the capacity of taxis to function as the default public transport mode is not compromised in the process.

Taxi users also want choice in the type of taxi service available, the type of vehicle used to provide the service and the fare that they pay. Some people are prepared to share a vehicle for a lower fare, while others are prepared to pay more for a luxury or premium standard vehicle. The success of the NightLink FlatFare services is evidence of this. While the taxi industry in Queensland itself has a long history of innovation (Cabcharge, EFTPOS in vehicles, premium taxi services, maxi taxis, people movers as taxis, taxi rank marshals, GPS tracking), further innovation needs to be encouraged and facilitated.

Strategy

12. Improve the productivity of the taxi system

Actions

12.1 Review TOPTA to identify opportunities to improve taxi system productivity.

There is a need to balance the requirement of government to optimise the performance of taxi services and the need of the taxi industry to optimise its productivity to remain commercially viable. Opportunities may exist, for example, to change the existing regulatory framework that requires taxis to be at the disposal of a taxi booking company when not hired, without compromising taxi service waiting times. Such a change, if it was possible, would allow anybody wanting to use taxis to provide micro transit services on a contracted basis to deal directly with a taxi management company or an individual taxi operator with the necessary capacity.

This would improve the capacity of the taxi industry to compete in the growing market for micro transit services on a best value for service basis.

12.2 Work with other government agencies to ensure that the procurement of government funded ‘micro’ transit services is open and contestable.

For government’s part, government itself is an increasingly significant purchaser of micro transit services in various forms. Examples include the Department of Communities Home and Community Care (HACC) funded community transport services, Queensland Health (non-urgent patient transport services) and TMR itself (small vehicle school services for students with disabilities). Government’s interests in this regard are best served by it being able to procure such services from the best available service provider, at the best available price including taxis.

12.3 Work with industry to explore ways of reducing ‘no shows’.

‘No shows’ occur when a driver, having accepted a job dispatched by a booking company, arrives at the designated pick-up point to find there is no customer waiting. ‘No shows’ are not only wasteful from a productivity viewpoint, they can also impact upon the income of drivers and operators.

12.4 Explore options for introducing a fee payable to the driver to assist the embarkation and disembarkation of people with disabilities.

In a similar way, the additional time that drivers provide in assisting people with disabilities in and out of taxis at either end of the trip is not fully remunerated through the metered fare. A passenger assistance fee is one potential way to deal with this productivity issue.

12.5 Undertake ongoing, targeted compliance activities to protect the taxi market.

TMR will protect the taxi market from illegal operators through regular and targeted compliance activities and enforcement campaigns undertaken by the Taxi Compliance Unit and the general Compliance workforce.

Strategy

13. Improve choice and innovation within the taxi system

Actions

13.1 Review TOPTA to identify and eliminate systemic impediments to choice and innovation, including but not limited to:

- Barriers to entry for new booking companies.
- Schedule 8 of *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Regulation 2005* (TOPTR).

In principle, there are no statutory barriers in TOPTA to the entry of new taxi booking companies. In practice, however, no new taxi booking company has entered the industry since the TOPTA reforms first came into effect more than 15 years ago. A review of TMR’s policies and an examination of other factors which may be unintended barriers for entry should be undertaken.

Vehicle type has been used for the past 50 years as a key regulatory instrument for enforcing the statutory market entry restrictions that apply to taxi services. Increasingly, however, these provisions are functioning more as a barrier to innovation in the taxi industry than to competition in the taxi market.

13.2 Scan developments in other jurisdictions and internationally on an ongoing basis and provide ‘innovation’ updates via the industry portal.

Once the taxi industry portal is operational (Action 8.1 refers), it will be used by TMR to raise industry awareness of best-practice innovation in other state jurisdictions and internationally.

A green system

While the taxi system has a negligible environmental footprint in itself, consumers will increasingly expect the taxi system to be environmentally sustainable if it is to continue to offer an attractive alternative to private transport into the future. To the extent that the taxi system does have a negative environmental impact, it arises from the tail pipe emissions of taxis (air pollutants; Green House Gas (GHG) emissions). Taxi tail pipe emissions, in turn, derive directly from the consumption of fossil fuels (petrol and LPG²). Moreover, the current taxi fleet is entirely dependent upon fossil fuels as an energy source. This means that the taxi system is extremely vulnerable to rising oil prices.

Outcome

...the taxi system will have a high level of oil resilience and low emissions

Higher global oil prices are here to stay and certain to rise even higher in the years ahead. The Queensland Government first recognised oil vulnerability as a major strategic concern in the April 2007 Queensland Oil Vulnerability Taskforce Report and followed up with the release of a more thorough analysis of the vulnerability of the road transport sector, in particular, to rising oil prices in late 2008³.

The primary response to the vulnerability of the taxi system to rising oil prices is to improve vehicle fuel efficiency. Improved vehicle fuel efficiency means reduced tail pipe emissions. Reduced tail pipe emissions means improved air quality and lower GHG emissions. Improved fuel efficiency also means lower fuel costs. Lower fuel costs mean a more financially viable taxi system and, potentially, lower fares.

Internal to the taxi system itself, there are two main ways to improve vehicle fuel efficiency and to reduce vehicle emissions. For example by:

- the take-up of more fuel efficient vehicle and engine technologies (for example, lighter vehicles and hybrids)
- adopting more fuel efficient practices (for example, eco driving).

Strategy

14. Improve the fuel efficiency of the taxi fleet

Actions

14.1 Implement 'Greening the taxi fleet' ClimateQ initiative.

To encourage the uptake of fuel efficient/low emissions vehicles by the taxi industry, the Queensland Government has introduced the 'Greening the Taxi Fleet' initiative as a key initiative in the transport sector component of the ClimateQ: Toward a Greener Queensland strategy. Under this initiative, TMR applies a 15 percent preference rule to tenders for new taxi licences where the taxi operator agrees to purchase and operate a 'green' vehicle (defined as a vehicle that emits less than 140 grams of carbon dioxide equivalent for every kilometre travelled).

² Liquid petroleum gas

³ Oil Vulnerability Strategy/Action Plan for Queensland: Research Paper, Heuris Partners Ltd (September 2008)

14.2 Raise industry awareness about oil vulnerability and climate change.

Even before the 'Greening the Taxi Fleet' ClimateQ initiative was introduced, cost-conscious taxi operators had begun to use Toyota Prius hybrids as their vehicle of choice in increasing numbers. This trend is expected to gather even greater momentum now that the Toyota Camry hybrid has become available in the market place. For similar reasons, there is a parallel movement within the taxi industry away from LPG as a fuel and towards diesel (diesel vehicles are around 30% more fuel efficient than the petrol equivalents). While these trends are encouraging, analysis undertaken by the Department of Energy, Economic Development and Innovation under the Carbon Outlook initiative has established that small to medium enterprises in the transport sector generally have limited or no understanding of the potential cost impacts on their businesses of climate change/emissions trading and peak oil. Raising industry awareness in this regard, whether by direct educational campaigns of some kind and/or via the industry portal would assist in remedying this situation.

14.3 Promote energy-conscious industry practices (for example, eco-driving and eco-maintenance).

Eco-driving (reducing fuel consumption by teaching drivers how to drive more smoothly, operate their vehicle within an optimal rev range and so on) and eco-maintenance (adopting vehicle maintenance practices specifically designed to reduce fuel use) are potentially cost effective ways to improve the fuel efficiency of the taxi fleet and to reduce emissions. Regular tuning, for example, can reduce fuel consumption by up to 10 percent while even something as simple as increased tyre pressure can result in a three percent improvement in fuel economy.

14.4 Implement a mandatory fuel efficiency standard for taxis.

A proposal to introduce national mandatory fuel efficiency standards for private motor vehicles is under consideration within the Council Of Australian Governments framework. Should this proposal be adopted then it would flow through to the taxi fleet in Queensland as a matter of course. However, if the proposal is not adopted at a national level or is put on hold, consideration will be given to introducing the equivalent proposal specifically for the Queensland taxi industry.

3. The future

The Queensland Taxi Strategic Plan is a five year strategy to address the contemporary issues and challenges facing the taxi system in 2010 and to guide the system to 2015 and beyond. It proposes a substantial program of work that needs to be carefully planned and managed over this five year period, taking into account the priorities of government, necessary sequencing considerations and TMR's capacity to deliver at any point in time. This will be done through the Taxi Action Plan 2010-2015.

Taxi Action Plan 2010-2015

The taxi action plan will define the key performance indicators and 2015 targets against which success will be measured for each outcome in the strategic plan (Action 7.1 refers). It will also identify the related high level milestones and timeframes. The specific program of work to deliver on those milestones will be managed through rolling three year business plans. Each three year business plan will set out the specific actions to be taken in the immediate financial year in detail and provide a less detailed outline of the actions planned to be taken in the subsequent two out-years.

Working with industry and the community

Industry and community involvement is crucial to achieving the desired outcomes of the strategic plan. In implementing the strategic plan, TMR will keep abreast of the issues and concerns of taxi users and the broader community through the Taxi Hotline and its program of regular customer satisfaction surveys.

TMR has dealings with taxi industry stakeholders on a day to day basis, on the ground through its extensive regional network administered by the Transport Services Division (TSD) and at a head office level through the Passenger Transport Division. This informal engagement can be relied upon to alert TMR to potential industry issues and concerns with the implementation of the strategic plan if and when they first emerge.

As well, TMR engages with the taxi industry on a formal basis through a number of established forums:

- Bi-monthly taxi operational issues meetings chaired by a TSD Regional Director.
- Quarterly SPC meetings.
- Quarterly TIHSC meetings.
- Quarterly Taxi Industry DDA Reference Group meetings.
- Twice yearly TIAC meetings (from 2011).

These forums provide an effective framework for a more structured engagement with industry stakeholders as do industry-initiated processes like operators forums.

Not all sectors of the taxi industry are fully represented in these formal structures, however, nor are all those stakeholders whose interests are otherwise adequately represented able to participate directly in them. Accordingly, TMR will augment these established consultative arrangements by conducting an annual round of open stakeholder forums across the state. These new forums will provide the opportunity on a regular basis for a two-way engagement between TMR and the taxi industry at large about progress toward the achievement of the Queensland Taxi Strategic Plan.

Monitoring and review

TMR will monitor and review progress towards the achievement of the strategic plan on two levels:

- At a work program level – by monitoring performance under the rolling three year business plans.
- At a strategic level – by monitoring performance against the KPI's and targets prescribed in the Taxi Action Plan.

TMR will report on this progress through the established whole-of-government and departmental reporting arrangements and in accordance with the established reporting timetables and protocols.

Attachment A
 Queensland Taxi Strategic Plan – strategic linkages



