



Media Release

Wednesday 22 April 2015

RAC calls on Government to act on taxi regulation

RAC is calling for further action on taxi regulation in WA, following last month's release of the Harper Competition Policy Review.

General Manager, Corporate Affairs Will Golsby, said RAC welcomed the findings of the recently released Harper Review, which recommended changes to the way the taxi industry is regulated, as well as introducing a more flexible approach to innovative service offers that do not fit neatly within existing regulation.

"The taxi industry is a major part of this transport network with almost 13 million trips recorded in 2013, and will play a key role in providing for the future mobility needs of Western Australians," Mr Golsby said.

"The taxi sector is an important part of WA's transport system and can be particularly important for the mobility of the elderly and people who have a disability.

"In May last year, RAC commissioned Professors Allan Fels AO and David Cousins AM to conduct an independent Review into aspects of the taxi industry in Western Australia.

"We commissioned the Review to help ensure our members have access to better transport options. This is why increasing the flexibility, efficiency and affordability of the services provided by the taxi industry were key elements of the Review.

"The Independent Review of Aspects of the WA Taxi Industry, released in November 2014, resulted in 34 recommendations. It is time the State Government detailed how they will respond to these findings."

RAC wants more focus on regulations which currently restrict competition and innovation within the industry.

"In the case of Western Australia, some of the problems highlighted by both the Harper Review and the independent review can be traced directly to a licensing system that has been in place since 1958."

This system causes taxi fares to be higher than they should be and the report to RAC found that it increases fares by about 16 per cent, or an average of \$3.30 per trip. It's a situation that the authors of the Review called "unfair".

WA's taxi drivers are essential to the taxi industry and the independent review also found the system of bailment*, under which ordinary drivers operate, to be "exploitative and undermines good service performance" and recommended it be reviewed as part of a reform program.

"RAC is also especially concerned about the poor state of services for customers who use a wheelchair, including that WA currently has just half the proportion of multi-purpose taxis than Melbourne.

"The purpose of the Review was to provide RAC and the government with independent advice about improving services provided by the industry. How the government plans to act on the industry Review's findings remains to be seen."

RAC, as part of its Review, also surveyed its members and the community in metropolitan and regional areas to understand their views, their experiences, and their opinions.

Media Contact: Kylie Bonkowski 0401 703 719

* Drivers obtain use of the vehicle and its licence from a licence owner or holder for a shift or a number of shifts for a fee and pay for this from the income they receive from the meter.