

Taxi Newsletter



Welcome to the August 2019 edition of the Taxi Newsletter.

Release of Owner-Operator Licences (OOTLs)

The Transport Commission is required by legislation to make available OOTLs in each Tasmanian taxi area each year. The number of OOTLs to be released in 2019 for each particular taxi area and minimum tender price is:

Taxi area	Number of OOTLs to be released	Minimum Tender Price
Hobart	16	\$60,000
Launceston	5	\$35,000
Devonport	1	\$23,000
Burnie	1	\$23,000
Ulverstone	1	\$17,250
George Town	1	\$12,500
Perth	1	\$12,500
West Tamar	1	\$12,500
Meander Valley	1	\$12,500
Circular Head	1	\$11,250
Break O'Day	1	\$10,800
New Norfolk	1	\$10,800

Taxi area	Number of OOTLs to be released	Minimum Tender Price
Huon Valley	1	\$7,500
Glamorgan/Spring Bay North	1	\$3,750
Kentish	1	\$3,750
Penguin	1	\$3,750
Tasman	1	\$3,750
Dorset	1	\$2,250
Glamorgan/Spring Bay South	1	\$1,875
Bruny Island	1	\$1,000
Central Highlands	1	\$1,000
Flinders Island	1	\$1,000
King Island	1	\$1,000
West Coast	1	\$1,000

The OOTLs will be made available by tender. The tender will be open between 28 September 2019 and 2.00pm 16 October 2019 and will be advertised in the major Tasmanian newspapers and at www.tenders.tas.gov.au.

The Commission must make OOTLs available for all taxi areas including Hobart. OOTLs must be made available as the moratorium on release of licences has ended. The moratorium prevented any additional OOTLs being made available in all taxi areas for the years 2016 and 2017 and prevented release of OOTLs in Hobart in 2018.

The contact officer for all questions about the tender or submitting a tender is Anne-Maree Mills, Manager Regulations and Concessions. She may be contacted by email at anne-maree.mills@stategrowth.tas.gov.au.

Appropriate systems for a taxi service

An accredited operator of a taxi service must have systems (or procedures) that meet the Accreditation Standards. The Accreditation Standards set out the minimum safety specifications for a passenger transport service.

When the accreditation systems are working and they meet the Accreditation Standards:

- the accredited operator will be aware of important dates such as when registrations and vehicle inspections are due
- taxis will be registered and roadworthy
- drivers will be appropriately licensed and certified and
- passengers and drivers will be safe.

When the accreditation systems are not working:

- taxis become unregistered, are not presented for inspection on time, and/or may become unroadworthy
- drivers may not be appropriately licensed and certified and/or
- the taxi service may become unsafe.

There is information at <https://www.transport.tas.gov.au/passenger/operators> to help accredited operators build accreditation systems that meet the Accreditation Standards. This information includes:

- the *Operator Accreditation Manual (Taxi Services)* which sets out the Accreditation Standards and
- the *Operator Accreditation Manual (Forms)* which sets out the minimum information that you need to collect for your systems to meet the Accreditation Standards.

Accredited operators may choose to collect and store other information that is not included on the Forms and the systems. Electronic alternatives can be used instead of paper based forms.

Records (including information on the Forms) used for the Accreditation must be kept for at least 3 years, and be available to an auditor or the Commission.

Accredited operators need to review their accreditation systems regularly to make sure they work. This is very important. If a taxi becomes unregistered or unroadworthy, the cause of the taxi becoming unregistered or unroadworthy needs to be found. When the cause is found, the operator needs to fix the accreditation systems so that it doesn't happen again.

The accreditation systems are tested by an auditor at regular, scheduled intervals. The audit report provides information that helps the Commission to determine if the accreditation systems meet the Accreditation Standards. If the accreditation systems do not meet the Accreditation Standards, the Commission will work with the Operator to improve the accreditation systems in various ways which may include education, monitoring, restrictions or sanctions.

Defect notices issued to taxis

The Transport Safety and Investigation Unit has recently issued traffic infringement notices (TIN) and defect notices for taxis with non-compliant tyres. Non-compliant tyres pose a safety risk to drivers and passengers when braking and on slippery or wet roads.

As part of the Pre-Departure Inspection (Accreditation Standard 2.2) the tyres on every taxi should be looked at each day before the taxi is used. The Pre-Departure Inspection should detect tyres which are nearing replacement well before they become non-compliant and do not meet Vehicle Standards.

When non-compliant tyres are found on a taxi it shows the accreditation systems are not working and:

- when the taxi with the fault is detected on road, a TIN or defect notice may be issued
- when the taxi with the fault is presented for regulatory inspection, the taxi will not pass inspection and
- when the Commission becomes aware that the accreditation systems are not working, the Commission will work with the Operator to improve the safety of the taxi service.

Pre-Departure Inspection reports must be kept for 3 years (Accreditation Standard 1.2 Record Keeping).

If a taxi has been issued with a defect notice or does not pass the regulatory inspection, the accreditation systems should be revised to establish the factors that led to the taxi being used on-road when it was defective. Some things to do are:

- review the pre-departure checklist to ensure details are included in relation to each item to be inspected
- check drivers are aware of their responsibilities when performing a pre-departure inspection
- make any necessary improvements to the system to ensure conformance into the future and
- tell employees / drivers about the improvements and ensure employees / drivers sign a form acknowledging that they are aware of and understand the procedures (these forms are kept with the records).

Taxi driver authorisations

Accredited operators are responsible for ensuring their drivers are appropriately licensed and certified to drive public passenger vehicles.

There is a new on-line tool available on the State Growth website at

https://ptinfo.transport.tas.gov.au/ancillary_check.aspx

The on-line tool allows operators to check that their drivers have a current driver licence and ancillary certificate by entering the correct driver licence number and surname of their driver.

Taxi Smartcard Supplement

A holder of a Taxi Smartcard who is a participant of the NDIS can keep their Taxi Smartcard until 31 December 2023. The amount of taxi subsidies that they can use on their Taxi Smartcard will be capped. The amount of the cap is:

	Travel in a wheelchair	Do not travel in a wheelchair
Cap - Year 1	\$1,000.00 (60% of taxi fares up to \$30.00 per trip)	\$1,000.00 (50% of taxi fares up to \$25.00 per trip)
Cap - Each other year until 31 December 2023	\$350.00 (60% of taxi fares up to \$30.00 per trip)	\$350.00 (50% of taxi fares up to \$25.00 per trip)

There are rules for an NDIS participant using their Taxi Smartcard. The rules are:

- taxis are not free
- Taxi Smartcard users need to pay for some of the taxi fare
- the Taxi Smartcard cannot be used at the same time as transport funding in the NDIS plan and
- the Taxi Smartcard cannot be given to anyone else.

The cap will not apply to a holder of a Taxi Smartcard who is not a participant of the NDIS.

The next Taxi Newsletter will set out the date when the cap will begin.

Wheelchair-accessible taxi (WAT) interim trip subsidy payments

Interim WAT trip subsidy payments (Interim WAT payments) stopped on 1 July 2019.

Interim WAT payments were put in place in September 2016. Interim WAT payments were intended to serve as a proxy for the WAT trip subsidy payments that WAT operators would no longer receive. WAT trip subsidy payments were no longer made as Taxi Smartcards were cancelled when the holder became a participant of the NDIS.

Participants of the NDIS will now keep their Taxi Smartcards until the end of 2023. It follows that WAT operators will continue to receive the WAT trip subsidy payments until December 2023, making Interim WAT payments unnecessary.

Misuse of Taxi Smartcards

From time to time a taxi driver may suspect a passenger is misusing a Taxi Smartcard. This may occur when:

- the passenger's appearance does not match details on the Taxi Smartcard or
- the passenger is attempting to use both NDIS funding and the Taxi Smartcard at the same time to obtain free taxi travel.

Even though the taxi driver may suspect the misuse of the Taxi Smartcard, a driver must always accept a Taxi Smartcard which is presented to them. When the taxi driver suspects that there may be some misuse of a Taxi Smartcard, the driver should:

- write down the number of the Taxi Smartcard
- write down the time, date and place of the taxi travel
- write down the reasons that the driver suspects that the Taxi Smartcard may be misused and
- email the above to passenger.transport@stategrowth.tas.gov.au.

Taxi Fare Review

There was a very good response to the invitation to provide input and views about a taxi fare increase. These responses together with responses from other community groups will be considered together. The outcome of these responses will be communicated in the next newsletter.

Regulations and Concessions Unit

If you need help you can email: operator.accreditation@stategrowth.tas.gov.au.