

The Victorian Taxi Industry *Backgrounder for Local Government*

While not generally recognised as a form of public transport, the Victorian taxi industry fills a crucial gap in transport networks, providing door-to-door access to areas unavailable via train or bus, without adequate parking facilities, or too far away for pedestrians and cyclists.

Taxis also serve a crucial role for those with limited mobility and as a highly accessible mode for emergency travel.

Approached properly, taxis can serve as an excellent complement to existing transport networks in a local area.

Advantages of taxis

- *Flexibility* – route and timing is completely dependant on the user's wishes.
- *Safety* – professional drivers ensure a higher degree of safety than personal driving and avoid the exposure to risk that comes with cycling or public transport.
- *Accessibility* – Especially in metro areas, taxis are easy to find and can easily be ordered via phone.
- *On demand* – trips are not made unless there is demand, increasing accessibility and efficiency.
- *Point-to-point* – taxis are the only mode that takes a passenger directly to their destination that is not self-driven, such as cycling, driving or walking

Limitations of taxis

- *Reliability* – congestion, availability delays and lack of direct control make taxis less reliable than the timetabling of trains or the self-determination of driving
- *Cost* – Per kilometre, taxis are the most expensive mode of travel. This limits their accessibility for those of lesser means and makes them impractical for extended or regular trips.

Victorian taxi Operators

In Victoria, there are over 50 taxi Operator businesses, operating 4,755 taxis between them. The majority of these are in the Melbourne metropolitan area, as displayed below:

Metropolitan	3,873 (including 237 wheelchair-accessible taxis)
Outer Suburban (including Country)	648 (including 132 wheelchair-accessible taxis)
Regional (Ballarat, Bendigo & Geelong)	234 (including 32 wheelchair-accessible taxis)
Total	4,755 (including 401 wheelchair-accessible taxis)

The **Victorian Taxi Association (VTA)** provides a map, locating each Operator in Victoria:
<http://www.victaxi.com.au/taxi-company-locations.aspx>

Who is the VTA?

The Victorian Taxi Association (VTA) represents the Taxi Industry and is a 'Peak Body' for the industry, responsible for developing standards and processes for the industry, and acting on behalf of all members when lobbying government or promoting the interests of its members.

The VTA serves as an excellent resource for enquiries about the taxi industry and works proactively to build partnerships with local government to promote awareness and good working relationships.

The VTA website can be accessed at: <http://www.victaxi.com.au/>

How is the taxi industry governed?

The relationship between the various entities in the industry is complex. An Industry Map can be downloaded from the Thinking Transport website, which shows the relationship between the main groups and a useful glossary of terms.

How can local governments and the taxi industry assist each other?

Local governments, taxi operators and drivers all have an interest in providing **good quality transport**. Projects such as promotion of taxi rank locations, through to partnerships such as the highly successful [WYNCabs project](#), all go towards maximising both the business received by the taxi industry, and the accessibility of transport to local residents.

The [WYNCabs project](#) also overcomes the significant barrier of Cost to taxi usage by providing residents with limited mobility taxi use for as little as \$2 per trip.

Safety in the community and in the cab is also a high priority of local government, taxi Operators and taxi drivers especially. Awareness and safety campaigns as well as close communication between all parties go a long way towards improving safety for all. The information and insights of taxi drivers are all the more valuable to local government, given their very close proximity to trouble spots during evenings and weekends.

Also, many taxi drivers are **recent immigrants to Australia**. The VTA also takes a strong interest in awareness and integration of these new Australians. This is directly in the benefit of local government and there is much scope for partnerships on the issue.

Further information

For further information about the Victorian taxi industry, consult the following sources:

- [The Victorian Taxi Association](#)
- [VLGA's Thinking Transport website](#)
- [The Victorian Department of Transport 'Taxi & hire vehicles' website](#)

1. Concerns for taxi drivers (per council area if possible)
2. How Councils and cab companies can assist each other on matter such as safety, access, licensing enforcement, etc
3. Disability fares scheme