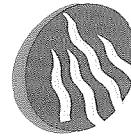




Hon Rachel Nolan MP
Member for Ipswich



**Queensland
Government**

Our ref: MC48375

Minister for Transport

Your ref: Petitions

23 APR 2010

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Streets
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to a petition number 1406-10 lodged with the Legislative Assembly by Mr Peter Wellington MP, Member for Nicklin on 25 March 2010, about the removal of recognition of the Taxi Council of Queensland as the peak industry body.

Historically, the Taxi Council of Queensland (TCQ) has been identified as the peak representative body for the taxi industry. The Department of Transport and Main Roads engages the TCQ in quarterly Strategic Planning Committee meetings and through other broader committee memberships such as the Taxi Industry Health and Safety Committee and the Taxi Industry Advisory Committee. These latter two committees also have representation from other taxi industry stakeholders.

In July last year, I announced a number of reforms designed to improve safety and service standards for the taxi industry in Queensland. This package of reforms was developed following feedback received from the public through the Taxi Complaints Hotline, submissions from operators and drivers, the results of targeted compliance and mystery shopper campaigns and a comparison of interstate standards.

Legislation given effect from 1 November 2009, introduced a prerequisite requirement on all applicants for a taxi driver authorisation to have held a driver licence issued in Australia for at least 12 months. This is in addition to the existing requirement that a person holds an open Australian driver licence. Legislation given effect from 1 November 2009, also introduced a minimum age for taxi drivers of 20 years. This is consistent with the minimum age at which a person, who first obtained their licence in Australia, would be eligible to apply for a taxi driver authorisation.

In addition, a program will soon be rolled out that will see all applicants for taxi driver authorisation assessed by approved English assessors using a nationally agreed English assessment standard. Work is also underway to ensure that the national taxi driver training standards are rolled out as quickly as possible.

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I also asked the department to establish the Taxi Industry Advisory Committee comprising representatives from across the industry and the community. This committee has now been formed and includes members who are taxi drivers, operators and owners as well as other industry and government representatives.

The members of the committee include the Chief Executive Officer of the TCQ, a South East Queensland taxi booking company representative, regional taxi booking company representatives, an independent operator representative, the Cab Drivers Association of Queensland, an independent taxi driver, the Transport Workers Union, the Ethnic Community Council of Queensland and Disability Services Queensland. The committee has met on three occasions and information about the committee, including the minutes of meetings, is available on the department's website.

The establishment of the committee represented the first time the Cab Drivers Association of Queensland and its preceding bodies had been provided with a direct voice to government. This place at the table offered the Cab Drivers Association of Queensland both an opportunity to be heard and a responsibility to work constructively.

The department is working with key industry stakeholders in preparing a taxi strategic plan that will set out a vision and action plan for taxi services over the next five years. The development of this strategic plan has been the subject of significant consultation with industry stakeholders and will be considered by the Taxi Industry Advisory Committee at its next meeting. A further consultation process will provide an opportunity for industry and public comment.

The Queensland Government will continue to work with all industry members and other stakeholders to achieve the vision of making Queensland's taxi system the safest, most customer-focussed, best performing and most sustainable in Australia.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'R. Nolan', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

RACHEL NOLAN MP
Minister for Transport