

Accessible Point to Point Transport Working Group Forum Minutes

Tuesday, 4 December 2018 – 2pm – 3.30pm

1. Welcome

Present

Consumer Representatives

Karen Stewart (via video conference call)	Alice Springs Consumer User Group – Somerville
Michelle McColm	State Manager – National Disability Service
Helen Egan	CEO Disability Advocacy Services
Valerie Dearman	

Industry Representatives

Hira Samy (via video conference call)	Alice Springs Multiple Purpose Taxi (MPT) Operator
Colin Dawson (via video conference call)	Alice Springs Taxis network
Imran Nadeem	Darwin Radio Taxis network
Fred Franklin	Darwin MPT Driver

Government Representatives

Sam Livesley (via telephone call)	Department of Health, Office of Disability
Traci Keys	Director, Anti-Discrimination Office
Bernie Ingram	DIPL (Chair)
Greg Turner	DIPL (Deputy Chair)
Simon Gillam	DIPL (Darwin)
Taunya Miller	DIPL (Secretariat)

Apologies

Consumer Representatives

Robyn Burridge	User Group – Integrated Disability Action
Sue Shearer	User Group – Council of the Ageing

Industry Representatives

Georgina Bracken	Tennant Creek Transport
Kais Alselawi	Gove Transport network
Sam Abolghasemi	Katherine Taxis network
Bill Piantoni	Metro Minibus network
Terry Pachos	Blue Taxis network

Government Representatives

Erin Ingham	Deputy Director – Office of Disability
May Taylor	DIPL (Alice Springs)

2. General Business

2.1 Confirmation of Minutes from Meeting 9 October 2018

The Chair welcomed all present and an introduction of members was conducted.

The Working Group did not raise any issues with the tabled previous meeting minutes.

2.2 Previous Action Items

The Working Group discussed the action items from the previous meeting, including:

- MPT (Multi-Purpose Taxi) Data

An overview of the MPT data sheets was provided to the Working Group.

Each month, the Network provides data to DIPL on how many wheelchair jobs were booked through the Network system and the MPT operator provides data on how many wheelchair jobs were completed through rank / hail (outside of Network bookings).

The Working Group was asked to consider whether a recommendation should be made to mandate minimum monthly MPT job performance for each region. Should the group agree to set a minimum benchmark then Commercial Passenger Vehicles Compliance Unit will contact the MPT operators who are in the low percentile range.

Action item: DIPL to provide to the group, example MPT data sheets based on different percentile groups (10%, 25%, 35%) as an overview for setting a minimum job quota based on a percentile range.

- Minimum MPT Job Performance Indicators

DIPL sent letters to nine MPT's operators in the low percentile range to request reasons why they transported low numbers of wheelchair passengers. Responses received from the operators included that the Network had not allocated many wheelchair jobs to the individual MPT, vehicles were off the road, and wheelchair mechanisms in the MPT were broken and therefore could not carry wheelchair passengers.

The Department will provide a further summary on the responses received from the operators regarding low wheelchair passenger numbers at the next Working Group meeting.

DIPL sent out courtesy emails to all Networks across the Territory regarding training staff at call centres to ensure the correct taxi type is sent out to passengers. Feedback was requested from Networks regarding driver training including specific training in strapping in wheelchairs. DIPL is currently waiting on responses from the Networks and will provide the group an update on this matter at the next meeting.

Action item: DIPL to provide to the group a summary on the responses received from the industry regarding low wheelchair passenger numbers.

- Identify Key Priority Areas to Improve Customer Service

The Working Group members in Darwin are currently working on a list of key priority areas to improve customer service in the Darwin region however the list is incomplete at this stage. The list will be provided to the group at the next meeting.

A key recommendation includes ensuring the onus is placed on the operator to train the driver on the operational use of a MPT.

It was also raised that each MPT driver should take a ride in the back of an MPT in a wheelchair (as a wheelchair passenger) during their training regime in future.

The group further raised concerns regarding wheelchair tie downs particularly that some wheelchairs are not manufactured with the anchor points and cannot be safely secured in an MPT. The Chair advised the group that a national project has commenced which is looking at this issue.

The Working Group suggested that the Department could look into measuring the ties down counts instead of relying on complaints from individuals as the individual could end up being discriminated against.

Action item: DIPL to look into automatic counts for wheelchair restraints and tie down measure for MPT vehicles.

- Driver Training

DIPL contacted the Networks across the Territory to gather feedback on driver training/refresher training and disability specific training. The Networks responses have not yet been received but will be included for consideration in the 2020 commercial passenger vehicle industry review.

DIPL also contacted the Disability Organisations across the Northern Territory for feedback regarding disability specific training for MPT drivers.

DIPL will provide a summary of the responses received from the above organisations and Networks to the group at the next meeting.

The Working Group was advised that the draft Bailment Agreement between the Bailor (taxi operator) and Bailee (taxi driver) have been updated to include a condition that the Bailor ensures the Bailee has received necessary instructions particular to the vehicle including wheelchair lift mechanism and restraint systems.

Action item: DIPL to provide a summary of the responses received regarding disability specific training for MPT drivers to the group at the next meeting.

- Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) and Lift Incentive Scheme (LIS)

The Working Group was advised that a full review of the TSS and LIS is currently being undertaken by an external consultant. The review will consider the current lift incentive amounts and administration approaches. As such, the action items relating to these matters will be carried over until the TSS review is completed next year.

In terms of the Cab charge mobile device for use in the Tennant Creek Transport Minibus; Tennant Creek can apply for merchant approval from Cab charge and once approved, can get a fairway plus meter along with a handset installed under the dash in the minibus; however, the minibus will need to travel to Alice Springs for installation.

DIPL has also emailed TSS and LIS information to the Disability Organisations to promote the schemes in their office.

The group suggested that the schemes should be further promoted to:

- Medical Practitioners
- Health Services
- Aged Care Provider
- National Disability Insurance Scheme, and
- Wheelchair Suppliers

The Working Group also suggested that the list of all the above organisations addresses could be provided to the Networks so that the address can be placed into their systems to ensure the drivers drop the wheelchair users off to the correct address.

Action item: DIPL to further promote Transport Subsidy and Lift Incentives Schemes to medical practitioners, health care providers and aged care providers across the Northern Territory.

3. New Business

3.1 Identify Key Priority Areas to Improve Customer Service

Concerns was raised regarding Traffic Control Officers restricting MPTs access to events providing an example of the recent Carols by Candlelight event at the Gardens where the roads were blocked off so

vehicles could not drop off or pick up passengers at the gate. This inadvertently meant that wheelchair users could not be dropped off or be picked up closer to the event.

The group agreed that the Department should communicate with the holders of major events to improve access for wheelchair passengers at major events; including, a turnaround point for MPTs.

Action item: DIPL to liaise with Major Events, Darwin City Council and Traffic Control in relation to allowing accessible wheelchair vehicles access to major events.

Action item: Members in Darwin and Alice Springs to discuss and develop a list of key priority areas to improve customer service which will be discussed at the next meeting.

3.2 Use of Collapsible Wheelchairs

The Working Group discussed the possibility of use of collapsible wheelchairs noting that that wheelchair users with the ability to use collapsible wheelchairs could be transported by standard taxi types or rideshare vehicles instead of being dependant on MPTs as the wheelchairs can be folded and placed in the boot of the vehicle during the journey.

The Working Group noted that whilst collapsible wheelchairs may be good in theory, the idea is highly likely to be impractical in real life; however, if a customer called up a Network advising that they have a collapsible wheelchair that Networks could send out a standard taxi instead of a MPT.

The Working Group further noted that it is the role of the wheelchair user's health care providers and/or transport care suppliers to determine the best chair for them based on the wheelchair users needs and requirements and it not up to the transport industry to recommend wheelchair types.

4. Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 5 March 2019 at 2pm.

Meeting closed 3.15pm