



Australian Taxi Industry Association

# ANNUAL REPORT

**2017**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

## VISION STATEMENT

*Enhancing the mobility and well-being of the Australian community.*

*We do this through efficient, safe, reliable, on-demand, door-to-door services.*

## KEY STRATEGIES 2014-2018

- 1. Strengthen the ATIA's value proposition to member State Associations / Councils.*
- 2. Enhance ATIA's government relations to promote effective advocacy for the taxi industry.*
- 3. Build strategic alliances at the national and international levels.*
- 4. Enhance ATIA's public image and peak body profile.*
- 5. Develop infrastructure to support ongoing development and implementation of ATIA's strategic plan.*

## ATIA LIFE MEMBERS

1976 N. S. Lake

1986 C. H. Dwyer OAM

1988 R. L. Kermode AM, MBE

1988 F. A. Lang

1988 N. P. Hawke

1990 K. K. Lambert OAM

1993 J. W. Kagan

1995 J. L. Bowe

1998 R. W. Morrow

1999 A. J. Goodridge

2001 K. B. Foley

2002 J. J. McKeough OAM

2006 W. Sievers OAM

2009 H. J. Harrison

2013 N. D. Sach

2015 B. Wilkins

2016 K. Hancock

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## AUSTRALIAN TAXI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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## AUSTRALIAN TAXI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Members are advised that the forty-ninth (49<sup>th</sup>) annual general meeting of the Australian Taxi Industry Association Limited will be held as follows –

Date: **Sunday, 27 May 2018**  
Time: **12 noon**  
Venue: **Boulevard Room 1**  
**Mantra on View Hotel**  
**22 View Avenue, Surfers Paradise**  
**Gold Coast, Queensland**

#### AGENDA

1. Confirmation of minutes of the forty-eighth Annual General Meeting
2. President's Report
3. Chief Executive Officer's Report
4. Presentation of Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2017
5. Election of Directors
6. Election of Office Bearers
7. Confirmation of Honorariums
8. Confirmation of Auditor
9. ATIA annual conference in 2019

Yours faithfully

Blair Davies  
Company Secretary  
8 April 2018

## **AUSTRALIAN TAXI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION**

### **ATIA PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

Across Australia the taxi industry is confronting the challenge of a vastly different legislative, regulatory and competitive environment. An environment that doesn't just increase competition but does so while providing significant cost advantages to our biggest competitors. So, after trashing the balance sheets of tens of thousands of Australian families, the respective state governments then adopted personalised transport reforms that severely inhibit the ability of the Australian taxi industry to rebuild value back into members' businesses and to recover some of the wealth that has been stripped away by cavalier governments. In this environment, the principle role of state peak bodies and the ATIA must be to advocate for changes that help to correct the competitive disadvantages being endured by all sections of the industry.

Failure by state governments to recognise the competitive imbalance they have created will ultimately result in a denigration of service quality, unacceptable safety risks for customers and substantial increases in the cost of services. Every deregulation event that has ever occurred anywhere in the world in the personalised transport / taxi industry has always produced the same results; with it now being painfully obvious that the market failure caused by the unfettered adoption of ride sourcing services internationally is forcing many countries to act to build protections and fairness back into regulatory structures.

To more effectively confront the challenges facing the taxi industry the ATIA has adopted a new constitution. This new structure provides the flexibility for the national body to adapt to different or unforeseen circumstances that may emerge over time. The new framework enables the ATIA to fill the void in states where there is limited state-based representation and creates the ability for individual owners, operators and companies to join the association directly. In short, the intent of the change is to allow the industry's national peak body to adapt to the new paradigms that emerge, to strengthen the industry's representation at a state level and to allow greater direct participation by individuals and organisations.

Under this new framework, it is possible that some state bodies may wish to achieve greater levels of efficiency and coordination by consolidating under a common framework. The resulting efficiency improvements include having one PR organisation and / or one social media firm acting in all states and as well as nationally. Such changes would reduce costs while improving our coverage, content and consistency of messaging in the mass media and social media. Establishing a national taxi magazine is another potential benefit, with there being substantial savings in terms of unit production costs and a more attractive proposition for advertisers, with a circulation potentially spanning all taxi jurisdictions in Australia. Of course, there are other mechanisms available to the state associations and the ATIA to achieve similar outcomes and these will be considered in terms of achieving the best outcomes going forward.

The ATIA is continuing to fulfil its primary responsibility to the industry in providing national representation associated with issues that bridge the state divide and fall into the national arena. As with all state and federal political advocacy, progress is arduous and time consuming. This was witnessed by the implementation of the Australian Taxation Office's (ATO's) GST ruling in 2017 where the ATO finalised GST arrangements in respect to ride sourcing operations. It took over two years of determined, consistent and unwavering advocacy by the ATIA to get the right ruling made, fight off a court

challenge and have a sensible and fair GST policy fully implemented. The point is that political advocacy is a not an easy or simple process as some in the industry suggest. It takes dedicated persistence, an effective strategy and the building of respect for the industry from the political players.

Finally, I would like to reiterate to industry members that this fight will be won but winning may have to be achieved metre by metre, fighting every issue with all that we have. The industry must be prepared to stay unified, remain committed, with unflinching determination, seeking to support each other wherever and whenever we can. To do otherwise risks weakening the arguments that we convey to the government and the industry suffering the yoke of unfair legislation longer than otherwise needs to be the case.

Max McBride  
President  
Australian Taxi Industry Association (ATIA)

## ATIA CEO's REPORT

The Australian Taxi Industry Association (ATIA), as the industry's national peak representative body, performs two key roles:

1. providing leadership on matters with national application or significance; and
2. supporting members by facilitating the exchange of advice, expertise and resources across jurisdictional boundaries.

This report presents the major activities undertaken by the ATIA in 2017 under the following headings:

- Personalised Transport Reforms;
- GST and Ride-Sourcing;
- Grab-a-Cab! Campaign;
- Global Taxi Service Quality Network;
- Driverless Vehicles;
- Disability Standards;
- Taxi Rank Master Plans;
- Lobbying;
- Membership;
- Executive Committee;
- International Relations; and
- 2017 Australian Taxi Conference.

### PERSONALISED TRANSPORT SECTOR REFORMS

At the Federal Government level, the ATIA continued its engagement of elected officials and key decision makers about safety, taxation, insurance and accessibility concerns in relation to ride-sourcing business models during 2017. These issues were also highlighted to members at the annual conference in Hobart, raised with regulators at National Taxi Regulator Group (NTRG) and National Accessible Public Transport Advisory Committee (NAPTAC) meetings, and became a staple topic for discussion in meetings with allied industry bodies.

In 2018, the ATIA intends to continue its efforts to promote a level playing field for competition between all competitors in the personalised transport sector.

### GST and RIDE-SOURCING

After lengthy but effective advocacy from the ATIA, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) determined in mid 2015 that ride-sourcing drivers substantively provide taxi services for the purposes of GST (i.e. under "A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999).

Importantly, the ATIA's advocacy in relation to GST and taxation generally has been based on removing regulatory interventions that distort markets. If taxi drivers must register for GST, supply quarterly Business Activity Statements (BAS), and declare their earnings in their annual income tax returns, then so must ride-sourcing drivers. This is entirely consistent with the ATIA's call for a "level playing field" for all providers of taxi services. In the ATIA's view, competitive advantage should not derive from differential regulatory burdens.

Consistent with previous form, Uber responded to the ATO's ruling by attacking the ATO through the media, attacking the ATIA similarly, putting up its uberX prices by 10%, and challenging the ruling in the Federal Court. The case finally got into court on 20 and 21 July 2016, and on 17 February 2017 Justice Griffiths handed down his carefully considered decision in some 144 paragraphs. Justice Griffiths rejected Uber's arguments and agreed with the ATO that uberX drivers were supplying taxi travel services within the meaning of the GST Act.

This was a very important win for ATIA and the taxi services industry more generally.

## GRAB-A-CAB! CAMPAIGN

The ATIA continued to promote its Grab-a-Cab! campaign during 2017, highlighting the benefits of using taxi services:

- [www.grabacab.net.au](http://www.grabacab.net.au); and
- Grab A Cab Facebook page.

Importantly, the Grab-a-Cab! strategy remains focussed on positive messaging and complements the PR activities of members and our international counterparts (e.g. TLPA, IRU, CTA, NZTF).

## GLOBAL TAXI SERVICE QUALITY NETWORK

The ATIA continued to support the development by the European based, International Road Transport Union's (IRU) initiative of a global certification scheme for taxi service booking apps. The scheme, UpTop Global Taxi Network (GTN), promotes global interoperability of legitimate taxi booking apps. Globally, UpTop has more than 500,000 taxis participating in the scheme.

Relevantly, UpTop remains based on the seven (7) criteria developed by the ATIA for app endorsement, namely:

1. safety;
2. service quality;
3. fares & payment;
4. no discrimination;
5. responsibility;
6. accountability;
7. lawful.

In 2018, the ATIA intends to continue to be an active member of the IRU.

## DRIVERLESS VEHICLES

The ATIA expects that Autonomous Vehicle (AV) and Connected Vehicle (CN) technologies will experience rapid growth and development within the 10 year time horizon and early deployment

of AV technologies may start impacting the industry from 2020 onwards. These technologies have the potential to be transformational for whole economies and present as both opportunity and threat for taxi services.

Recognising the need for the taxi services industry to stake a claim in the possible futures associated with AVs (and CVs), the ATIA continues to participate in the Australian Driverless Vehicles Initiative (ADVI). Also in that regard, the ATIA remains engaged with the National Transport Commission in relation to AVs/CVs through formal submissions.

It is expected that advocacy of the industry's interests regarding AVs / CVs will remain a key focus for the ATIA in 2018 and beyond.

## DISABILITY STANDARDS

In 2017, the ATIA continued its active membership of the National Accessible Public Transport Advisory Committee (NAPTAC). The ATIA was also active in NAPTAC's Accessible Taxi Reference Group (ATRG) and Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT) Modernisation Steering Committee (DMC).

During 2017, the DMC progressed the task of modernising the DSAPT. In comparison though, the ATRG was relatively inactive in 2017. As was the case in the previous year, it was seriously hampered by the changing regulatory landscape for taxi services occurring disjointedly across the States and Territories. In 2018, the ATIA will continue to advocate for achievable and sustainable targets for wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT) services to replace the current target in the DSAPT.

The ATIA's advocacy for a national labelling scheme for mobility devices remains a work in progress. There remains broad support for establishing a labelling scheme, however that support



stopped short of certifying anchorage points on mobility devices. While the safety benefits of such certification are compelling, the associated implementation costs of a genuinely effective scheme are generally viewed as prohibitive.

Advocacy of the industry's interests in respect of viable accessible taxi services will remain a key focus for the ATIA in 2018.

## **TAXI RANK MASTER PLAN**

The ATIA maintained its library of city specific taxi rank master plans for Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Canberra. Regrettably, ATIA was unable to finalise a taxi rank master plan for Perth due to difficulties in getting local input and sign-off.

All completed taxi rank master plans are published as public documents that are available for downloading from the ATIA website ([www.atia.com.au](http://www.atia.com.au)).

## **LOBBYING**

In 2017, the ATIA concentrated its lobbying resources on levelling the playing field for all taxi service providers in Australia. In doing so, we continued to reach out to build alliances with peak bodies of industries / sectors also experiencing unfair competition from market entrants exploiting regulatory loopholes that allow avoidance of taxation and compliance costs. In that regard, the ATIA continued its membership of the Council of Small Business of Australia (COSBOA).

In 2018, the ATIA will continue its practice of making direct, timely, transparent and targeted representations to elected officials in Canberra. This strategy of personal briefings, continues to be the most productive and effective use of our advocacy resources.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Responding to the disruption in the industry and its impact on members, the ATIA embarked on a radical overhaul of its constitution during 2017. This process was concluded at the Special General Meeting held on 29 December 2017 and the adoption of a new constitution that paves the way for ATIA to accept taxi networks, licence owners, operators, drivers and other stakeholders as direct members. Previously, industry members could only engage ATIA via their respective state based taxi association.

In 2018, ATIA will continue working for, and with, its state association members. However, with its new constitution in place ATIA will be able to take a more visible position with all industry stakeholders and engage with them more directly. This should lead to better communication between ATIA and industry and in turn, better advocacy by ATIA of the industry's issues.

## **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

There were several changes to the ATIA Executive Committee in 2017.

Most notably, President John Bowe decided to retire at the AGM after more than a quarter century of distinguished service to ATIA. Mr Max McBride was duly elected to the vacated position of President.

Messrs Brian Wilkins and Jim Triantafyllou were elected as Vice Presidents and Mr John McKeough was elected as Treasurer and Minutes Secretary. Mr Roger Burdon remained on the Executive Committee.

Notwithstanding the changes, the work of the Executive Committee continued without interruption, delivering continuity of focus and direction for the Association throughout the year.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The ATIA continued its membership of the US based Taxicab, Limousine and Paratransit Association (TLPA) in 2017. Cementing the strong ties between both organisations, the ATIA's CEO was re-elected as an international vice president of TLPA and as such, served as a member of the TLPA's Board and Executive Committee.

The ATIA was unable to continue its association with the International Association of Transport Regulators (IATR) due to budgetary constraints. The ATIA views its engagement with IATR as a useful alliance and may review options renewing membership in the future.

The ATIA continued its membership of the European based International Road Transport Union (IRU) and was an active member of the IRU's UpTop GTN International Evaluation committee, its Taskforce on Innovation (bus, coach, taxi), and its Taxis and Hire Cars with Driver (TA) Group.

Fostering and developing the ATIA's international relations with the TLPA, IRU, the Canadian Taxi Association (CTA) and the New Zealand Taxi Federation (NZTF) are viewed as ongoing priorities for 2018.

## 2017 ATIA TAXI CONFERENCE

The 2017 ATIA International Taxi Conference was held in Hobart, 30 April – 4 May. Given the tough business environment confronting the industry, the 2017 conference represented a pivot point for many to reset and start focussing on how to rebuild and grow the industry.

Once again, the conference proved the value of industry members coming together to share experiences and viewpoints in relation to innovations, trends and developments impacting our industry. Special thanks go to our conference coordinator, Ms Rachel Beard, and to Ms Liza Watt and her team at Ozaccom+.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, 2017 was a very productive year for the ATIA. It highlighted how important it is to have a genuinely effective peak representative body operating at the national level that is dedicated to protecting and promoting the best interests of the taxi services industry.

Blair Davies  
Chief Executive Officer  
Australian Taxi Industry Association

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## **NEW SOUTH WALES TAXI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION REPORT**

NSW like most of our states has gone through massive operational changes with the commencement of the new Point to Point Transport Regulations in November 2017.

The training and educational material required to professionally train our service providers (networks), operators and drivers has taken up a massive amount of time, effort & money from our office, to ensure that our members are informed and up to date with their responsibilities and commitments.

The Passenger Service Levy, \$1.10 per fare, is being introduced to pay back the \$250 million allocated for the industry assistance fund. To date, only \$100 million of the fund has been paid out, and we are still awaiting the release of the remaining \$142 million to further assist our members.

The Passenger Service Levy is not only hard to collect from drivers, it is also very time consuming and the administrative costs are causing concern to both small and large service providers.

We will shortly be requesting assistance from our service providers for further information as we prepare a detailed costing to present to Government to hopefully see our service providers be able to recoup their admin costs associated with the collection of the levy.

It is the consensus that since the arrival of "Uber" type services, the reduction in business (trips) is between 35-40% and it is because of this situation that we have in excess of 300 Taxi licences "on hold" in NSW.

Our sale price on Taxi plates is down to \$170,000 in Metropolitan Sydney. Commercial leasing rates have decreased by \$600 per month from the pre-December 2015 rates, they are

currently around \$1,200 + GST per month.

Our industry still tends to be its own worst enemy as drivers are still refusing short fares, failing to carry out bookings allocated, dressing shabbily and the cleanliness and comfort standards of vehicles is not what our clients expect today.

Our CTP Greenslip policies are finally being sorted after numerous delays. From 1 April 2018, ride-share services will be required to pay a kilometre-based payment for booked services, on top of their Class 1 CTP. Policies for NSW Taxis have a capped charge of \$6,400 per annum for metro and \$3,800 for country/regional. This does not equate to the 40% reduction suggested, but in fact is only a 28% reduction.

Taxis travelling low kilometres (less than 107,000kms metro and 85,000kms regional) will be able to "opt in" to a kilometre based charges option, which will see them pay a lower premium.

I am hoping our Insurance Regulator will attend this Conference to fully explain the procedure for new CTP scheme.

I will be happy to answer any questions whilst at the Conference.

Brian Wilkins  
President  
NSW Taxi Industry Association

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## **CANBERRA TAXI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION REPORT**

In the two years since the introduction of ride-sourcing services in the ACT, the taxi industry has enjoyed some success in its dealings with the ACT Government, but is frustrated by its actions or non-actions in some areas.

*Issue of Licences*

Early in the year, the Government announced that its previously leased, and surrendered, forty-seven standard taxi licences would be reissued at the rate of ten every three months. This was a shock to the taxi industry as service delivery was at an all-time high and earnings per car had dropped an average of \$80 per day since the advent of ride-sourcing.

The announcement left little time for the CTIA to react and the first ten licences were released, but after submissions to Minister Gordon Ramsay, only five more standard licences and five WATs were re-issued in 2017 and future releases have been suspended until the recommendations from the formal evaluation of on-demand transport have been made and considered.

The CTIA appreciates the attitude shown by Minister Ramsay.

#### *Review of On-demand Transport*

The above-mentioned formal evaluation of on-demand transport was due in October 2017, but now is not expected before May 2018. Its objective is to assess the two-year introductory period of ride-sourcing services in the ACT, its effect on the taxi industry, and to recommend the way forward for taxi and on-demand transport services.

The Canberra taxi industry has already taken steps to deal with the “new world”, but feels its ability to compete is being hampered by the absence of parameters within which it might work in the future.

#### *Competitive Neutrality*

As in the Christmas/New Year period in 2016 Transport Canberra’s annual Nightrider Service which provides buses to pick up in the city and transfer revellers to outlying town centres, again linked with Uber which agreed to then transport revellers from the bus drop-off to home for \$10, whilst receiving a

subsidy of \$5 from Transport Canberra. The taxi industry sees this action as a breach of competitive neutrality rules and will seek fairer arrangements in 2018.

#### *Cross Border Issues*

Cross border issues persist for the Canberra taxi industry. Dealing directly with the NSW Government has proved difficult for the CTIA member who operates cars in Queanbeyan. Of particular concern was the setting of procedures for the collection and disbursement of the \$1.10 levy applied to NSW hirings. This was resolved through co-operation with the ACT Government and Cabcharge.

Another cross-border concern relates to changes in NSW legislation that the CTIA believes result in all of country NSW being regarded as one taxi administrative area, meaning that a taxi released in country NSW may operate in any part of the state. If this were to result in only a relatively small number of new NSW country taxis being attracted to Queanbeyan, and who, through cross border arrangements, were to move into Canberra, it could seriously damage the ACT taxi industry and take control of it away from the ACT Government.

#### *Use of Taximeters*

Legislation in the ACT mandates that a taximeter must be engaged when a passenger is riding in a taxi. To better compete in the marketplace, the CTIA is seeking to have changes made. It feels that for booked work, prepaid and set fares offer competition to the ride-sourcing model and that in the event of a variation in a meter reading and an agreed fare, either a passenger or a driver could feel disadvantaged. To be able to exit a booked car without going through a payment procedure has been claimed as a good point for ride-sourcing. It would also be a good point for the taxi industry.

## Compliance Issues

Through liaising with both ACT and NSW government officials, the CTIA has concluded that compliance means different things to different people. Much has been made of the need for compliance on all matters for which a single operator or driver, or a taxi company can be held responsible and be summarily penalised for breaches. Such matters as OH&S, proper record keeping and vehicle maintenance, all very important, are to be diligently pursued, as they should be; but there is no evidence of diligence to enforce compliance to regulations or rules which have been set ostensibly to ensure the provision of a level playing field for taxis and ride-sourcing operators. There seems to be no resolve to prevent illegal parking on or near taxi ranks by ride-sourcing drivers or to police ride-sourcing vehicle identification requirements, both being issues that impact on passenger safety.

## Conclusion

The CTIA looks forward to the conclusion of the review into on-demand transport so that it might set its course to provide better and more competitive services to on-demand users and a more secure future for those in the industry.

John McKeough  
Chairman  
Canberra Taxi Industry Association

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## TAXI COUNCIL OF QUEENSLAND REPORT

The Queensland taxi industry has endured one of the toughest years in its history, with every section of the industry suffering from poorly crafted legislation/regulations and an enforcement regime which is effectively unenforceable. The competitive

disadvantages emanating from the changes are substantial, unfair and are forcing the industry to endure much greater difficulty than should have otherwise been the case.

After the announcement of the Queensland government's intention to permit the entry of ride sourcing and the subsequent release of the draft regulations and legislation TCQ conducted a detailed analysis of the proposed laws, with the appropriate evidentiary support. This analysis revealed glaring holes in the legislation and highlighted the likely problems the government was going to have in respect to enforcing the new laws. The resultant report was provided to the government, forming a substantial part of the industry's response to the government's intentions. Also included were concerns the industry had in terms of inadequate industry compensation, the lack of personal safety protections and the tearing down of long established industry performance standards.

In its wisdom, the government did not provide much consideration to the analysis, however TCQ was effective in having some changes made to the legislation. First in terms of the competitive disadvantage, nothing is more obvious than CTP. The Queensland taxi industry was paying \$6,200.00 per year per taxi while each ride sourcing vehicle was intended to pay only \$580.00. In response to TCQ's irrefutable logic and persistent lobbying the government regulator moved taxi CTP premiums down to \$4,200.00, a far cry from that applicable to ride sourcing vehicles, but a substantial saving for taxi operators none the less. In addition to this, ride sourcing vehicles were moved to a standalone class, which creates the potential for hefty premium rises over time. TCQ's position remains that CTP is the most obvious example of competitive unfairness resulting from the entry of ride sourcing and we are continuing a campaign to have this regulatory distortion addressed.

In relation to fair and reasonable compensation, the point needs to be understood that no government has ever treated any other industry in such a disgraceful and disdainful way. No one in the industry should be unaware that in doing what they have done to the Australian taxi industry, every state government agreed to move ostensibly in the same direction, clearly with a mind to do so in a way that avoided the need to pay fair and reasonable compensation to licence holders. TCQ did put to the Queensland government that ride sourcing vehicles should be covered by a licencing system and that an appropriate annual fee be used to fund enhanced enforcement and to provide greater compensation to the industry. The government did put in place the licence system we suggested but did not follow through with charging a substantial annual licence fee. Importantly this creates the situation for a future, fair-minded government to put in place a funded compensation package without the need to establish new legislation and going through the normal convoluted Parliamentary process.

The Queensland government also legislated that security cameras must be in all ride sourcing vehicles that accept cash transactions. While there is much debate from within the industry whether this is advantageous or not, safety systems in ride sourcing vehicles are a significant weakness, whether it is 24/7 vehicle tracking, emergency response systems or security cameras.

Sadly, most of the predictions made in TCQ's analysis have played out as highlighted to the government. This includes several alleged rapes in ride sourcing vehicles since the legislation was announced; attacks and robberies on ride sourcing drivers; there has been substantial and well documented hardship experienced by industry participants; the government's enforcement program is proving to be ineffective as the legislation does not support most of the government's stated

endeavours in terms of enforcement; there has been a substantial increase in congestion problems especially in the night life precincts and the trashing of industry standards is resulting in substantial problems in terms vehicle standards and safety, especially with the wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT) fleet. In terms of the WAT fleet there is mounting evidence that the business model associated with Queensland's world's best system for delivery of WAT services has been so adversely affected that the industry has substantial concerns that operators can no longer afford the high cost of vehicle replacement and this will cause a substantial aging in the fleet. TCQ has a strategy in place to address this problem and are actively lobbying government in this regard.

In late 2016 TCQ commissioned legal advice to explore potential legal remedies in respect to the government's decision to allow the entry of ride sourcing into Queensland. This process involved the engagement of two specialist Barristers and preminent QC Shane Doyle. The advice received was in accord with the advice received by the ATIA and other state peak bodies. The advice was presented to 760 TCQ members in early 2017, together with a political strategy developed for the state election held 25 November 2017.

The 2017 year culminated with the state election where the industry became engaged in the political process in a way it has never done before. Since the election TCQ has developed new strategies to address the problems confronting the industry and has ramped up political advocacy in terms of enforcement, a fair and consistent competitive environment and the need for greater compensation. There are some indications that the government is listening to the advice we are providing, however progress is likely to be incremental, given that the government has planned an 18-month review of the new legislation and is wanting to rely on that review to make legislative changes.

Clearly the problems facing the industry can't wait for this review and so TCQ is actively pursuing every opportunity to push for faster remedies.

Max McBride  
President  
Taxi Council of Queensland

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## **TAXI COUNCIL SOUTH AUSTRALIA REPORT**

This year has been another difficult year for our industry. Much time and effort has gone into reporting Uber driver misdemeanours and blatant encroachments by ride-sourcing cars on the preserved rank and hail work of the taxi industry.

There is an underlying trend to redefine what is a hail and a taxi pick up point with emphasis on private land versus public land to create ranking zones for ride-sourcing. Legal opinion had to be sought to clarify the hail rights of taxis and under the current laws it is clearly in the taxi industry's favour.

Any attempt to exploit private land for rank and hail work automatically converts the land to public and therefore cannot be used by hire cars to generate work. Both the Liberal and Labor governments have given assurances that this area of our work is to be preserved for taxis in the future.

The State Government imposed a \$1 trip levy on the industry earlier this year as a way of collecting funds to pay out the assistance packages of \$30,000 for each plate owner and an average of \$1,000 for each lessee operator. This levy is expected to be in place for at least another five years to recoup the estimated \$35 Million that is being paid out.

Taxi Council SA (TCSA) has attempted to get the payments issued in ex-gratia

form in the hope of not making these funds subject to tax but the ATO views these payments as assistance to transition and not an extinguishment of a taxi licence as was the case in Victoria and therefore subject to tax. This issue is ongoing with the ATO.

Weekly leases for plates dropped drastically to the \$200 - \$230 per week range and are expected to drop even more in the future. Taxi plate prices have also fallen significantly and were selling between \$90,000 and \$110,000 throughout the year.

The industry has lost around 20% of its day work and more than 30% of its night volumes especially in the lucrative Friday and Saturday night shifts. Despite this, there have been noticeable signs of drivers shifting back to taxis as the competition amongst the never-ending Uber recruits intensifies and lessens the amount of dollars that go around.

New ride-sourcing firms keep registering their services but they all must adhere to the Regulations governing hire cars, which require a maximum 8-year vehicle, criminal and working with children (DCSI) clearances, medical checks and annual inspections by Government authorized mechanical centres.

The 13LIMO project started by 13CABS, the local Cabcharge branch, has faced opposition from traditional taxi operators. Many are the latter have been reporting what seems to be a downturn in the recruitment of "limos" and are very hopeful that Cabcharge will abandon this innovative move into "Uber style ride-sourcing" altogether sometime in the future.

Long established Managed Rank programmes at the Adelaide Airport, high traffic taxi ranks in the CBD, major sporting events and at important tourist spots around the city are operated by TCSA. The programmes are funded by Adelaide Airport Limited (AAL) and the Attorney General's Department.

Adelaide now has close to 10% of its taxi fleet as Wheelchair Accessible (WAT) and operated under a specific centralized dispatch centre to service the needs of the disabled community. WAT vehicles have a permanent seat on the TCSA Committee. WAT drivers are required to undertake the accredited training unit Provide Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Services to Passengers with Disabilities and delivered by the TCSA's RTO.

The ride-sourcing reforms introduced by the State Government in the previous year also involved the streamlining of training procedures. These have been maintained throughout 2017.

The basic driver training course is 1 day at TCSA and 1-day at a Taxi Network with the objective to have the driver on the road by close of business on the second day.

We are still producing drivers with acceptable levels of English and driving knowledge, unlike Uber which we have been informed, is dealing with many recruits who do not speak English, nor do they know their way around Adelaide.

TCSA also conducts a 1-day Taxi Operator Course and during the 2017 calendar year produced over 100 new graduates with the majority having gone on to lease a plate and commence a career as a taxi operator.

Adelaide Airport Limited (AAL) introduced its long expected additional

\$1 levy in the later part of the year. All Taxi, Hire Car and ride-sourcing Customers now pay \$3 to leave the Airport.

Taxi Council now heavily relies on the use of social media, especially Facebook, with a regular weekly publication called, "Get on Board with Taxis" and a very extensive email database to get its messages across. This approach has been very effective and now over 10,000 people a week get to see our views on the need for protecting and improving an important industry such ours.

TCSA has explored legal action options against the Uber Company for having disrupted our industry. This action is intended to recoup the loss of income streams for drivers, lessees and lessors and the major loss of plate value. Joint action with law firms from Victoria have also been considered.

QC opinions from SA and Victoria both suggest that there is a case to answer by Uber regarding unlawful behaviour, albeit with the process requiring evidence to be collected to prove the damages suffered.

Steve Savas  
President  
Taxi Council SA

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**THE AUSTRALIAN TAXI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION LIMITED's  
(A COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
for the  
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2017**