

## **Taxi Industry Board**

### **Competency Review Sub Committee**

#### **Terms of Reference As Approved by the Minister for Transport**

#### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Minister has stated that he is concerned with certain aspects of the taxi industry and in particular:
  - 1.1.1 Availability of taxis to meet reasonable customer demand;
  - 1.1.2 Standard of service provided to the customer; and
  - 1.1.3 Safety of the driver and the customer.
- 1.2 The Taxi Industry Board (TIB) has formed a Subcommittee to attend to the Minister's request relating to service. This document seeks to establish the terms of reference of the Subcommittee.

#### **2.0 Preliminary Observations**

- 2.1 It is assumed that the results of this review should seek to improve customer perception of the standard of service it should be able to expect from the taxi industry; and improve community perception of the industry in general.
- 2.2 The standard of service delivered to consumers by the industry is dependent largely on the competency of the taxi drivers providing the service.
- 2.3 A competent taxi driver applies knowledge gained through training and experience together with social skills and behaviour that result in a reasonable person being satisfied with the service.
- 2.4 Competency in service delivery is dependent on a multitude of factors. Two core factors are applicant selection and application of the training content.
- 2.5 The applicant selection process must address the potential suitability of the applicant as a taxi driver. This includes:
  - 2.5.1 The suitability of the applicant to this type of service industry;
  - 2.5.2 The educational and cultural background of the applicant;
  - 2.5.3 The motivation of the applicant; and
  - 2.5.4 The learning capability of the applicant.
- 2.6 Factors affecting the application of training content include:
  - 2.6.1 The standard of training;
  - 2.6.2 The comprehension and retention of course content; and
  - 2.6.3 The flexibility of training content and delivery to adjust to the learning capabilities of the successful applicant pool.

- 2.7 Training content affects competency. This is determined at a national level in conformity with the principle of federal and state mutual recognition policy.
- 2.8 In addition to the application of competencies, the taxi driver must be able to understand the factors that affect his ability to profit from his work as a taxi driver and put that knowledge into action.
- 2.9 The completion of the training course does not deliver a competent taxi driver. It depends on:
  - 2.9.1 The willingness and ability of the applicant to apply the content of the training and absorb post training experience; and
  - 2.9.2 The post training support and induction into the industry.
- 2.10 The Subcommittee should be drawn from members of the TIB supplemented by representatives from DOT and other appropriate regulatory of industry bodies, yet to be determined.

### **3.0 Suggested Terms of Reference**

- 3.1 The observations raise a number of questions:
  - 3.1.1 “What criteria should be imposed on applicants for taxi driver licenses?” The taxi industry is a mixture of businesses ranging from large dispatch service providers to a multitude of sole traders who undertake the actual driving duties. Given that the general public is the customer and that the community expects government to provide consumer protection, the criteria should serve the goal of adequately protecting the customer.
  - 3.1.2 “What inputs are required to produce a competent taxi driver training and induction programme?” Given the activities at the national level this probably needs to be one of reviewing what supplementary training content, if any, needs to be considered, and what should induction and support activities encompass?
  - 3.1.3 “Who is responsible for assessing driver competency?” The Department of Transport (DOT) applies sanctions to drivers who demonstrate incompetency but this is not the same thing as assessment of competency prior to an incident of incompetence. Should those who lease or sub lease be responsible for assessment of individual driver competency? This approach would spread the responsibility between DOT when it is the lessee and the private lessees.
  - 3.1.4 “What are the attributes of a competent taxi driver?” These attributes can be captured in mechanisms such as performance criteria expressed in lease arrangements and at a general level through such instruments as codes of conduct.
  - 3.1.5 “How should competency be assessed?” Assessment ideally takes place at two levels: proactive and reactive. Proactive monitoring includes periodic assessment of performance. At the reactive level complaint processes form the main activity.

- 3.1.6 “Who is responsible for maintaining driver competency?” This is probably a shared responsibility between Government and the various sectors of the taxi industry.
- 3.2 The subcommittee will produce a report based on the examination of those questions.
- 3.3 The Subcommittee shall consult with stakeholders being industry participants, service providers, regulators, users and customers to achieve its aims.
- 3.4 The Subcommittee will evaluate and comment on the submissions of each stakeholder.
- 3.5 The Subcommittee shall develop a preferred position on those questions and make recommendations as to how its position might be achieved.
- 3.6 The TIB subcommittee will present its findings and recommendations to the TIB by the end of September 2011.