



Speech By  
**Hon. Bart Mellish**


**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2024

## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Transport, Accessibility**

 **Hon. BJ MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (9.59 am): Access to reliable and accessible transport services for every Queenslanders is a priority for the Miles Labor government. Being able to catch a taxi when using a wheelchair can make a huge difference in the day-to-day lives of Queenslanders. It means better access to appointments, hanging out with friends and getting to the shops. As an MP and a minister, I have met with many people who rely on a wheelchair to get around. No matter how you get around, all Queenslanders should have access to reliable and safe transport.

Our government's Taxi Subsidy Scheme provides an affordable and accessible transport option for people with a disability who experience profound difficulties using other modes of public passenger transport. Our government increased our share of the taxi trip fee from \$25 to \$30 per trip in 2022 for all Taxi Subsidy Scheme members. We also understand the importance of providing reliable wheelchair accessible taxis right across the state. That is why in this year's budget we committed more than \$7.5 million to make it easier for Queenslanders with a disability to travel in taxis. This investment will increase the Lift Payment from \$20 to \$25, which is paid directly to taxidriver who complete wheelchair jobs for members of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. We are also doubling the Lift Payment on Christmas Day to \$50 to help people connect with their loved ones.

The Miles government's \$21 million Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Grant Scheme will also be extended for another year until the end of June 2025. The grant scheme funds half the cost of a new vehicle to make it easier for operators across the state to provide accessible taxi services. Applications for the grant scheme have also received a boost, with the maximum funding amount per application being lifted from \$45,000 to \$55,000.

Other initiatives include: continuing funding of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, with almost 1.25 million TSS trips taken in 2022-23 by almost 50,000 TSS members; a regulatory requirement that the incentive payment for drivers to deliver trips to TSS passengers in wheelchairs must be paid in full to the driver; and a new webpage regarding requirements and helpful information for industry and passengers about travelling with support animals.

Recent taxi industry related measures include compliance activities, resetting maximum fares and legislative changes to strengthen requirements for use of taxi meters to prevent overcharging of customers—but it does not stop there. As part of our Big Build, we are making train stations more accessible via our Station Accessibility Upgrade Program. These upgrades provide a single access path to the assisted boarding points, achieved through the installation of lift accessible footbridges, platform raising, and upgrading accessible parking and customer facilities. Let us not forget our ongoing program to make our NGR trains disability compliant after those opposite forgot about one in three Queenslanders across the state. We will always prioritise accessible transport because it is the right thing to do.