

## Question on Notice

No. 1074

Asked on 28 September 2004

DR CLARK asked the Minister for Transport and Main Roads (MR LUCAS)—

### QUESTION:

What steps are being taken by Queensland Transport to ensure that the Black and White Taxi Company in Cairns meets its contractual obligations to provide services for disabled passengers?

### ANSWER:

I would like to thank Dr Clark for her question and for her interest in this issue.

QT has established a policy on wheelchair accessible taxis that requires at least 10% of the State's taxi fleet to be wheelchair accessible taxis. I am advised that Queensland is the only State which sets a target of this nature. In Cairns currently over 12% of the taxi fleet is wheelchair accessible. As part of their taxi service contract with Queensland Transport (QT), Black and White Taxis in Cairns are required to report on their wheelchair accessible vehicle fleet's performance to QT on a quarterly basis. These reports measure the performance of the fleet against minimum service standards for wheelchair accessible vehicles that are contained within the conditions of the contract.

Again this approach is at the leading edge in Australia in the management of taxi services.

QT's records show that wheelchair accessible taxis in Cairns are performing well although not yet fully meeting the minimum service standards.

The company and QT are working closely to continue to improve this performance.

Black and White are also contracted to QT to provide taxi transport services for students with disabilities who attend special education facilities in Cairns. In order to reduce the demand on accessible taxis at peak periods, QT has invited public offers for a five year contract commencing from 2005 for the transport of students in three modified and one standard bus, instead of taxi vehicles.

QT will continue to monitor the performance of the accessible taxi fleet in Cairns and in particular the impact that the introduction of buses will have on the availability of taxis to meet the demands of the community with special needs.

In addition, QT conducts a comprehensive taxi service area review about every two years to ensure that the taxi service area continues to meet the needs of the entire community. The review takes into account the changing demographics to the area and

the performance of the taxi company. This review also identifies whether any additional wheelchair accessible licences are required in the Cairns area while considering the viability of additional licences.

QT has also recently announced that people mover type vehicles will be permitted to operate as conventional taxis. As a number of these vehicles will be able to transport single wheelchairs, this may also help with the provision of some additional wheelchair access services.

In conclusion, QT is proposing that all future taxi service contracts require taxi booking companies to develop action plans to address any shortfalls in meeting the minimum service level requirements.