

TAXI INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT FUND

2412. Hon Ken Travers to the Minister for Transport

- (1) How much is currently held, in the Taxi Industry Development Fund account?
- (2) financial years 2008-2009 and 2009-2010, can the Minister provide —
 - (a) an outline of the projects and programs funded through the Taxi Industry Development Account; and
 - (b) detail of the budgeted and actual expenditure to date for each of those projects?

Hon SIMON O'BRIEN replied:

- (1) As at 30 April 2010 there was \$17 083 165.87 in the Taxi Industry Development Fund account.
- (2) (a) The projects and programs currently funded through the Taxi Industry Development Account are outlined below —
 1. Multi-Purpose Taxi (MPT) Cadetship program (including MPT mentoring) is designed to encourage people into the wheelchair taxi industry by providing subsidised entry and training costs for up to 20 MPT Cadets per annum.
 2. MPT Vehicle Modification Grant program provides a \$15 000 subsidy towards the cost of installing a wheelchair hoist in a MPT (actual cost is approximately \$19 000).
 3. MPT Meter Relocation Grant program provides a small subsidy towards the cost of providing a taxi meter that is visible to the passenger seated in the rear compartment of the MPT.
 4. MPT Lifting Fee Subsidy program provides a subsidy to the MPT driver for picking up wheelchair jobs eligible under the Taxi User Subsidy Scheme (TUSS). Subsidy levels are \$7 for each job undertaken through a private booking, and \$10 for each job undertaken through an MPT coordinator / taxi dispatch service provider.
 5. MPT Stand-by Vehicle Trial program is a further 12 month trial whereby each of the two MPT coordinators has a vehicle readily available to service wheelchair taxi jobs that would otherwise go unanswered because MPT drivers regard these jobs as uneconomic.
 6. Taxi Driver Professional Development program requires all taxi drivers to undertake four hours of Professional Development training every two years. The training is provided by registered training organisations under contract.
 7. National Minimum English Standard for Taxi Drivers project was undertaken to research the English proficiency standards required for taxi drivers to do their job effectively. This WA-led initiative resulted in the development of a national standard in English proficiency that will be progressively adopted by all States and Territories from 01 July 2010.
 8. Taxi Driver Registration Testing program provided funding for Transport staff resources to undertake on-road taxi driver competency assessments prior to issue of taxi driver licences.
 9. Taxi Industry Board (TIB) was appointed by the Minister for Transport in accordance with the Taxi Act 1994. The TIB is primarily tasked with the development of policies and plans improvement of the taxi industry and also advising the Minister on the allocation of applications for grants of TIDA funds.
 10. Taxi Industry Performance Monitoring project provides funding for an external consultant to supply quarterly and monthly reports on the performance of the Perth metropolitan taxi industry. The reports are compiled from the operational systems of the two major taxi dispatch service providers in Perth and are made available to the public via the Transport website. The contractor also undertakes and supplies reports on annual Taxi Driver and Taxi User Surveys.
 11. Metro Taxi Fare Review project provided funding for an external consultant to develop an improved methodology for adjusting taxi fares and to subsequently run the fare model on behalf of the Department of Transport.

12. Taxi Rank Security and Taxi Rank Marshals program provides funding for security guards and rank marshals at the Northbridge and Milligan Street taxi ranks.
13. Taxi Fare Evasions program provides funding for Transport staff to investigate taxi fare evasion incidents with a view to recovering the fares owing to the affected taxi driver(s). This function was transferred to the Department of Transport from Western Australia Police due to insufficient resources being available to adequately investigate incidents of fare evasion.
14. Camera Download program provides funding for Transport staff resources to be on call 24/7 to download taxi security cameras following an alleged incident. This function was transferred to the Department of Transport from WAPOL due to insufficient resources that left taxi drivers waiting long periods of time before WAPOL were able to download camera images.
15. Interstate and Student Taxi Driver Grant program was developed in response to a shortage of taxi drivers in 2008 that resulted from strong economic growth and abundant employment opportunities. Grants to cover metropolitan taxi driver accreditation requirements were offered to experienced interstate taxi drivers to encourage them to move to WA. Grants were also offered to eligible WA tertiary students.
16. Taxi Driver Counselling program provides funding for taxi drivers in need of special counselling following a traumatic on-road experience.
17. Festive Season Media Campaign is a public awareness campaign advising of the availability of taxis over the festive season, and encouraging people to plan their transport needs ahead of time.
18. 'Hands-Off' the Driver Media Campaign is a public awareness campaign highlighting the presence of taxi security cameras in all taxis, and that any passenger found assaulting a taxi driver may go to jail.
19. Taxi Driver of the Year Awards is a contribution towards the cost of the Taxi industry's annual awards.
20. Green Hybrid Taxi Trial program provided a \$15 000 grant to assist taxi operators with purchasing a Toyota Prius for use as a 'green' taxi. Fifteen 'green' taxis have been introduced into the taxi fleet.
21. Toyota Tarago Trial program provided funding towards the cost of a trial in which a standard Toyota Tarago was modified for use as an MPT.
22. Joondalup Taxi Shelter project provided funding towards the construction of a taxi shelter at the Joondalup Health Care Campus.
23. Taxi Rank Infrastructure Audit project provides for an external consultant to audit all existing taxi rank facilities in the Perth metropolitan area and to consult with local governments, the taxi industry and other stakeholders about current and future taxi rank needs. This project is being conducted in conjunction with local government bodies.
24. Mounts Bay Road Slipway project provided funding towards the build of a set-down pick-up bay at the Esplanade train station to improve taxi access and availability.

(b) [See paper 2168.]