

# POSITION PAPER

**Organisation:** NSW Hire Car Association  
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**Topic:** The Future of the Hire Car Industry  
NSW Point-to-Point Transport Reforms 2016

**Date:** 4 March 2016

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## INTRODUCTION

The NSW Hire Car Association met with Government stakeholder representatives from Ministry of Transport, Transport for NSW and Roads and Maritime Services on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016. The meeting was prompted by industry wide panic over an FAQ posted on TfNSW website stating that hire car plates would be recalled and the industry would lose access to bus and transit lanes by December 2016. Both RMS and Police Highway Patrol had confirmed this statement over several incidents but no one in the NSW Hire Car industry had received any formal notice from any official body about this momentous decision.

During the emergency meeting with stakeholders (minutes attached) **Mr Jason Falinski, representing The Hon. Andrew Constance Minister for Transport, confirmed that no conclusive decision had yet been made about the fate of hire cars and that there was room to discuss and agree retaining hire car plates and access to bus and transit lanes.** He clearly stated that what the government was trying to avoid is everyone in the new “Booked Services” category having access to the bus and transit lanes and clogging them up.

## VALUE OF PROFESSIONAL DRIVERS

NSW professional hire car operators have provided a unique value to the Transport Industry, the Travel and Tourism Industry, Chambers of Commerce and the NSW Economy as a whole.

The efficient and secure transport of high profile customers and their families is a key value delivered by trusted hire car operators and drivers who become an extension of many families who are pillars of the NSW Economy. Testimonials can be presented by senior and tenured Australians to this effect. In fact access to bus lanes came into effect as a result of Supreme Court judges deeming it was a security risk for them to be sitting in congested traffic while being transported by hire cars. The judges themselves lobbied to give hire cars right of access to bus and transit lanes. In addition the ability for drivers to leave their

vehicles in a secure area at the airports and provide meet and greet services is imperative to assist elderly or disabled customers.

Hire Car operators also provide a unique value to overseas event organisers looking to host national, regional and global events in NSW. Completely eliminating “Professional Hire Cars” would have significant negative affect on the end-to-end offering to such event organisers and we believe this would have a substantial negative impact on how Travel and Tourism in NSW is perceived.

NSW hire car operators are on the majority run as small businesses and support extended families throughout the community. The ability to maintain professional standards and secure a decent income plays a small but vital part of the NSW economy. This is a group of hard working, highly professional operators who earn an honest living through this work in order to support their families and be effective contributors to the NSW economy.

## NSW HCA POSITION

The NSW Hire Car Association for the record and purposes of this document make the following statement:

1. We embrace reform and believe it is necessary
2. We have no issue fundamentally with the creation of 2 distinct point-to-point transport markets being namely, *Rank & Hail* and *Booked Services*
3. We embrace the opportunity to be further deregulated and “hire car operators” are confident we can continue to be responsible for and improve quality and standards of services to NSW travellers.
4. BUT, It is imperative that professional organisations and drivers who transport customers as a primary profession have a **unique identifier**
5. Attached to that *unique identifier* there be **certain privileges** such as:
  - a. use of bus and transit lanes
  - b. pickup up of passengers at loading zones
  - c. meet and greet service to passengers at airports and cruise ship terminals (where the driver is able to park their car in a secure location and leave the car to meet the customer and assist with baggage).

## MOVING FORWARD

The NSW Hire Car association understands that as part of the move towards deregulation the Government of NSW may not wish to continue managing “hire car plates” indefinitely.

The Industry would be willing to embark on a journey of securing a unique Certification Trademark that would effectively certify the quality and standards of industry participants at driver, vehicle and large operator level and whereby we become a fully self-regulated and certified industry.

The early thoughts around this are that private plated vehicles will be

- certified (under the formal Certification Mark)
- driven by a certified driver (under the Certification Mark) who will display their certification prominently in the vehicle
- be clearly marked (prominent authorised signage on the vehicles)
- be entitled to access bus and transit lanes
- be entitled to pick-up and drop off passenger in loading zones
- be able to park in special designated areas close to airport terminals and leave their cars in these areas to enter the terminal and greet and assist passengers

The underlying mechanics that would enable the above would be:

- The NSW hire car industry embark on creating and appointing an independent body to secure Certification Trademark Mark, execute transition and provide ongoing management.
- The Certification Body have real time access to driver and vehicle data for ongoing background check purposes
- Certified vehicles have a special indicator on their registration records which shows that this specific private plated vehicle is a *Certified professional point-to-point transport vehicle*
- Certified vehicles be identifiable to authorities such as parking officers, highway patrol and airport officers

Should the government of NSW be agreeable to the above, the next steps of comprehensive and robust execution would be a substantial undertaking. There are many questions that need to be addresses and the standards for both drivers, vehicles and operators to be mapped out and agreed and also the complex and time consuming process of actually applying for and securing the certification trademark. The NSW Hire Car Association believes it is at minimum a 3 year process in order to set up the Certification Mark and transition from the existing Hire Car Plates to the *new order*.

We would request government support in the following:

- 3 year transition period during which
  - current HC Plates are maintained
  - access to bus and transit lanes are maintained
  - airport meet and greet is maintained
  - loading zone pickup/drop off is secured

- negotiate a small number of new hire car plates to be issued annually over each of the 3 years – strictly to accommodate organic growth in the marketplace
- we be given a key contact in government to liaise with during the 3 year transition period
- subsidised funding to help us commence this process
- a new specific hire car related media release, in due course

## **NEXT STEPS**

Should the NSW Government be agreeable to the above in principle, we would like written approval and agreement/documentation of any special conditions and key milestones to be achieved throughout the execution process.

We look forward to continued dialog with the NSW Government in crafting a point-to-point transport future that equally serves customers, operators and a sustainable NSW Economy.

[NSW Hire Car Association](#)