



## Living a Life.....Getting Out & About

We often hear complaints about **TAXIS**.

I say thank goodness for taxis.....

Because of extreme physical limitations due to arthritis which started as a child, I depend on the good old 'Cabbie' to get me to and from work every day. They have been successfully doing so for 26 years!!

I use the Victorian Multi Purpose Taxi Program as I cannot safely use public transport. There are still not enough accessible taxis and many passengers have to wait for more than an hour, but much work is currently being undertaken to rectify this situation.

I am often greeted by new drivers with "Why don't you use a maxi taxi?" They automatically associate physical disability with wheelchairs and needing to use a maxi taxi. But I am too stiff to use a wheelchair and cannot get into a maxi taxi safely. I use 'standard' taxis very efficiently, with the driver assisting me to get in and out.

Under the Victorian law there is an exemption from using a seat belt for some people with severe physical disabilities. Wearing a seat belt is just not practical in my circumstances. So I comply with the law and carry a doctor's certificate confirming that wearing a seat belt would be too difficult.

By building up good relationships with drivers, I find the system works very well, and I am chauffeured to and from work very reliably.

If you have to use taxis often, my tips are:

- Travel ahead of 'peak hour' leave early and come home early.
- If you need help, be clear in your instructions to the driver.
- Praise good and helpful drivers, and always round up the fare to the next dollar.

With the Cabbies help, I have maintained full time employment for half my life which has given me enormous enjoyment, independence and ability to lead a full life.

Taxis provide a vital service and are an important part of our transport system so, give the Cabbie fair go!!

Yours in happy travelling - John from Caulfield

## Access News Volume 1 2007

### Access Audits Australia

provides a wide range of access improvement services including access audits, training programs, policy development, community consultation and advice.

### AAA Turns 2000

AAA founding Director (Ms) Joe Manton recently announced that AAA just provided its 2000<sup>th</sup> service to one of its many and valued clients. This is a great achievement for the company, which was developed in the early 1990's in response to an identified need to address access issues in organisations and communities Australia wide. AAA would like to thank all of our valued friends and clients for their ongoing support. **Roll on 3000.**

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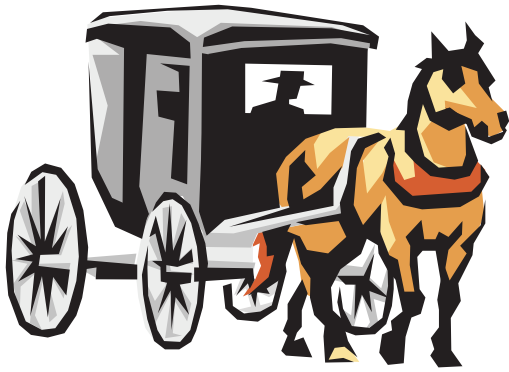
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## Taxis Over Time



The first taxis in Australia were horse drawn vehicles which plied throughout the city areas. These also included Hansom Cabs, a more elaborate type with a closed in cabin for the passengers, having two small front doors and glass windows and the driver sitting high at the back. Motor vehicle taxis were introduced into Sydney in 1906, followed soon after by the other major cities. Although motor vehicle taxis were being used at the time, horse-drawn taxis continued in use, in cities, until the early 1920s, with country towns still using them for much longer periods.

Motor vehicle taxis initially catered mainly for 'gentlemen of standing', including Judges, Barristers and other notables. The drivers wore uniforms with leggings, the same as those worn by chauffeurs of horse drawn carriages.

Each large taxi company had telephones installed in a steel box type cover at city and suburban ranks, direct to the switch control rooms in the city.



## TramTRACKER System

A new era for tram travel in Melbourne has arrived with real-time service information now available by phone for every tram stop in Melbourne.



**TramTRACKER** is a telephone service that provides Yarra Trams customers with tram arrival information by voice or SMS. From landline or mobile phones call 1300 MY TRAM 1300 69 8726 or SMS the Tracker Stop ID to 199YARRA 1999 2772



## Dial a Bus

The Invicta TeleBus Service is a unique bus service where you can ring and request to be picked up from and returned to, your home or closest accessible bus point. This service only operates within defined TeleBus areas in Mooroolbark, Nth Croydon, Chirnside Park, Lilydale and Rowville. There is a surcharge that applies for this service, along with normal Met Fare. For further information contact [www.invictabus.com.au](http://www.invictabus.com.au)

## Sensational Scooters

Under the Australian Road Rules, a scooter or wheelchair user is classified as a pedestrian and as such, must share footpaths and other pedestrian space.

A motorised scooter or electric wheelchair cannot be registered and you do not need a licence to ride such a vehicle. To legally use a scooter, you must have an assessed disability or significantly reduced mobility. People can only use a scooter or wheelchair that has a maximum speed of 10km/h. If a scooter can travel at speeds exceeding 10km/h it is likely to be classified as a motor vehicle and it would not be permissible to use on the road or footpath.



## Travelling with Scooters

You can take a motorised scooter or wheelchair on public transport. However, the following size and weight limitations apply.

- Combined weight of passenger and scooter or wheelchair must be less than 300kg.
- A scooter or wheelchair needs to be capable of turning through 180 degrees within an area of 2070mm by 1540mm.
- The space required for a stationary scooter or wheelchair is 800mm wide by 1300mm long.

## Scooter Etiquette

Using a scooter or wheelchair is often liberating and essential for many people within the community. It can also be challenging as barriers often occur that prevent safe and equitable access.

Scooter users will be sharing the footpath with other pedestrians so users must ensure they travel in a manner that supports easy and safe access throughout the environment for everyone.

The following tips are provided for '**Scooter Etiquette**'

- Plan your route
- Have a breakdown backup plan - RACV 132 582 can assist members
- Know where the closest battery recharge points are located
- Travel at walking pace
- Allow enough room in front of you to stop safely or quickly if necessary
- Be cautious when reversing or turning
- Don't leave your scooter against the building line in a shopping centre - park closer to the kerb so you do not block the footpath
- Be aware of changes in surfaces that can tip you over
- Remember when you are sitting, it's harder for car drivers to see you - dress to be seen
- Narrow pathways can be difficult - avoid them if you can
- Be patient, particularly in busy areas - slow down



## Scooter Hire

Electric Scooters and manual wheelchairs can be hired from shopping centres. This is usually a free service, but you will be required to show a form of identification. It is a good idea to book ahead as scooter and wheelchair numbers may be limited. Some supermarkets may also provide a courtesy scooter for customers, make contact with your local supermarket to enquire.



### Did you know ?

- If assistance is required to board a train, wait close to where the front of the train will stop so the driver can see you. This area is usually marked with a yellow or white rectangle on the station platform.
- The Companion Card is accepted on all Victorian Public Transport. [www.companioncard.org.au](http://www.companioncard.org.au)
- Assistance animals can travel on all public transport including taxis
- Melbourne has one of the largest rail systems in the world, with 15 lines.
- There are more than 295 Taxi services throughout Australia
- More than 16,500 Bus Stops need to be up graded in Victoria to improve access.

## RACV Emergency Wheelchair & Scooter Assist

This is a service that aims to get your wheelchair or scooter moving again if you happen to breakdown. If RACV cannot fix the problem, a taxi will be called to transport you and your wheelchair or scooter to your destination. See [www.racv.com.au](http://www.racv.com.au)

## ReCharge Scheme



The ReCharge Scheme is a MetroAccess initiative in partnership with local businesses and Mobility Aids Australia Pty Ltd. The Recharge Scheme is encouraging local businesses to provide a power point so motorised scooter and electric wheelchair users can recharge their battery giving them the confidence to get to and from their destination. To find out where ReCharge points are available go to [www.rechargescheme.org.au](http://www.rechargescheme.org.au)

## Contributions

Contributions to Access News are welcome and can be emailed to AAA at any time. [AAAaxs@bigpond.net.au](mailto:AAAaxs@bigpond.net.au)

## AAA Web site

Details about services provided by Access Audits Australia can be found on our website at [www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au](http://www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au)

Our site is designed to be accessible for all users. It has AAA W3C level compliance and is AAA Bobby approved. Earlier Access News editions can be downloaded and there are also links to other relevant access related web sites.

Information contained in **Access News** is intended to highlight the importance of improving access for every person

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