

# ACT TAXI INDUSTRY INNOVATION REFORMS

## NEW SERVICES NEW OPPORTUNITIES



## PASSENGERS

The ACT Government has announced innovation reforms to the taxi and broader on-demand transport industry. The announcement follows a review that investigated how emerging technologies and new business models can contribute to a better on-demand transport system.

### WHAT'S CHANGING?

The ACT will be the first jurisdiction in Australia to legalise and regulate ridesharing services, and the first capital city in the world to regulate ridesharing before the service has begun. The ACT will also regulate third-party taxi booking services.

The reforms will ensure that Canberrans have access to safe, flexible and affordable taxi, hire car and ridesharing services while also reducing significant costs and regulatory burden on the existing taxi and hire car industries to ensure they remain competitive and sustainable for drivers, owners and passengers.

### WHEN WILL THE CHANGES HAPPEN?

The reforms will take effect on **30 October 2015** and be delivered in two stages:

**Stage 1** is an interim phase that allows authorised ridesharing and other innovative booking services to operate subject to safeguards such as criminal history and driver history checks of drivers. It will also deliver an immediate reduction in fees for taxis and hire cars. This stage will start on 30 October 2015.

**Stage 2** involves the introduction of new laws into the Legislative Assembly to introduce the full suite of reforms, including driver accreditation requirements for rideshare and reduced regulation for taxis and hire cars. The new laws will be introduced by 30 October 2015 and subject to debate and commencement at a later date.

### WHAT WILL THE CHANGES MEAN FOR PASSENGERS?

**Safety:** public safety will not be compromised – taxi, hire cars and rideshare vehicles will undergo safety inspections and drivers will be subject to appropriate checks and health assessments. Specific CTP and property insurance will be required to be in place.

**Flexibility:** the introduction of ridesharing means an increase in travel options for Canberrans (including to and from the Canberra Airport), greater competition that will benefit the community through greater competition and opportunities for further innovation in the industry.

**Sustainability:** Canberra's on-demand taxi services for WAT passengers will not change. This will ensure consistency of travel for clients. The reforms will ensure that taxis and hire cars can compete and remain sustainable, for example, through lower regulatory fees.

**Taxi Subsidy Scheme:** the Taxi Subsidy Scheme will continue to apply to standard and WAT taxi services. It will not apply to ridesharing services.

**Surcharge limits:** permissible surcharges on electronic payments in taxis will be capped at 5 per cent.

## WHAT SHOULD PASSENGERS BE AWARE OF?

Only taxis (not rideshare or hire cars) are permitted to accept rides off the street (i.e. hailing a taxi) or from a passenger waiting at a taxi rank. Rideshare cars can only accept passengers through a booking service (usually a smart phone app). Your safety will be protected through mandatory cameras in taxis (or rideshare vehicles if cash transactions are accepted) and by triggering the safety features built into the relevant smartphone app for ridesharing.

Other features applying to rideshare:

- Rideshare drivers must have zero blood alcohol and be drug-free
- Cash cannot be used to pay for rideshare service until stage two of the reforms
- Surge pricing may not occur during a formally declared emergency
- Rideshare booking apps must provide a fare range before a booking is confirmed
- Privacy information about passengers, including bank and transaction information, used for rideshare trips must be handled in accordance with privacy legislation
- Rideshare drivers must use smartphones in accordance with Australian Road Rules.

## WHAT ABOUT THE TAXI AND HIRE CAR INDUSTRY?

The taxi and hire car industries will continue to be important ways to travel, and reforms will help to ensure these industries remain sustainable. Taxis and hire cars may also use third-party booking apps; however, rank and hail work can **only** be undertaken by taxis.

## WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PASSENGER?

As a passenger you have the right to:

- Make a phone booking with a taxi service, or hail a taxi (on a road or at a taxi rank)
- Agree to a fare through a ridesharing app (and pay through the app) before the trip – you cannot be asked for a upfront payment or tip
- View the driver accreditation details displayed in the car (in stage 2)
- Provide feedback about the service or make a complaint about the service to the booking service company (or to Access Canberra) if not satisfied with the response
- Inquire direct to the booking service company about lost property, and
- Reject a ride from any rideshare or taxi driver.

## WHAT ABOUT WAT PASSENGERS?

The Wheelchair Accessible Taxi's (WAT) centralised booking service (13WATS) and the Taxi Subsidy Scheme will remain unchanged, recognising the valuable improvements in services for people with disabilities since the 2010 taxi industry review reforms. Under stage 2 operators and drivers will be accredited and licensed to ensure standards of accessibility and service for people with a disability.

However these reforms are only the beginning for improving transport services in Canberra across the board, including for people with disabilities.

## HOW TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE REFORMS?

You can learn more about the reforms and how they affect you by visiting [www.act.gov.au/taxi-industry-reforms](http://www.act.gov.au/taxi-industry-reforms)