



Speech by

Hon. Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

Hansard Wednesday, 11 November 2009

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Taxi Compliance Unit

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.11 am): I am committed to ensuring high customer service standards in the taxi industry. This year, upon becoming Minister for Transport, one of the earliest issues raised with me was community concern about a declining level of service in the taxi industry, particularly in South-East Queensland. Members will recall that I acted quickly to establish a hotline to receive community feedback and that I subsequently announced a multipronged program of taxi reforms. The taxi hotline was established on 11 May this year and received 385 complaints to the end of October. Over the same period there were about 15 million passenger journeys. The main areas of complaint to the hotline were that drivers did not know where they were going, drivers had difficulty communicating with passengers and that the taxis were unclean.

I have established a Taxi Compliance Unit to increase roadworthiness inspections and licence checks across the taxi industry. By the end of October this year, a total of 1,109 taxis were intercepted in South-East Queensland by the Taxi Compliance Unit in these targeted activities. I am happy to advise that, despite our unprecedented level of investigations, there were no instances found of unlicensed or unauthorised drivers. On 1 November, one of the major elements of the reform package came into effect when two new standards, that drivers had to be at least 20 years of age and, more significantly, had to have a minimum of one year's experience driving on Australian roads, came into effect.

Finally, last week at the Australian Transport Council meeting of ministers, Queensland strongly supported the introduction of national licensing standards. These will provide for common high levels of taxidriver training, including English language proficiency across the country. It is expected that these standards will come into effect from July next year. These reforms are about customer service and safety standards and the Taxi Compliance Unit will continue to monitor the taxi industry and conduct further targeted compliance operations throughout the state.