

TAXIS — ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**193. Mr A.P. O’GORMAN to the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure:**

Will the minister advise the house of the latest initiatives that have been put in place to improve access to taxis for people with disabilities?

**Ms A.J.G. MacTIERNAN replied:**

I thank the member for Joondalup for the question. He has raised the issue of disability taxi services in this house on several occasions. I also want to acknowledge the member for Southern River, who has done very good work as the chair of the customer committee that helps the government constantly improve services.

Today the government has been able to announce two new initiatives: first, the introduction of Braille signage on the side of taxis. We are the first state to introduce such signage, which gives visually impaired people confidence that they can know the number of the taxi they are getting into. The members from the blind community on the customer committee have told us that this is an important advance for them. We have again been able to fund this initiative out the government’s fabulous taxi industry development fund, which is a result of the incredible reforms in the taxi industry, including the removal of the investors to make sure that this is an industry that is run for the benefit of the customers and the people who operate the taxis.

The second initiative—which the member will be very interested to know about—is that we have started a three-month trial with Black and White Taxis, which runs the majority of wheelchair taxis. The government will fund it to provide a standby taxi for the next three months, so that if a wheelchair taxi job is not allocated to a driver within the space of five to 10 minutes, it can pick that person up. We are very determined to improve the service levels to people in wheelchairs, who are so very dependent on our taxi services. If this system works, we plan to make this a compulsory requirement for taxi dispatch services that administer wheelchair taxis. This is more innovation from the state government to improve taxi services in this state.