

TRANSPORT — MULTI-PURPOSE TAXI SERVICES

3875. Hon Stephen Dawson to the Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Transport:

I refer to multi-purpose taxi (MPT) services for people who travel in wheelchairs or scooters in Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) is planning currently under way to place all of the MPT wheelchair taxis fleet in Western Australia into a single entity;
- (b) if yes to (a), why has the decision been made to reduce the number of service providers of MPT services to one;
- (c) if yes to (a), what consultation has been undertaken within the community to assess the implications of these proposed changes;
- (d) if yes to (a), will the service provider be determined by a competitive tender process and when will the details of the tender process be known; and
- (e) is the Minister aware that concerns are held by the wider community that the proposed changes to MPT will stifle competition, reduce innovation and services and deny choice of provider to people with disability?

Hon Jim Chown replied:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) It is evident that the service levels offered to taxi passengers who travel in wheelchairs are well below an acceptable standard. A review into the operations of the current MPT coordinators concluded that a dedicated taxi dispatch service should be established to meet the specific needs of passengers who require a wheelchair accessible taxi.
- (c) The Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability, the Disability Services Commission, National Disability Services (WA) and People with Disability (WA) have been consulted to canvass views in respect to the implementation of the MPT Dispatch Service. The comments and feedback from drivers and passengers have also been carefully considered during the review process.
- (d) Yes, the successful tenderer will be announced shortly.
- (e) The comments and feedback from drivers and passengers have been carefully considered during the review process. Changes to MPT services reflect the Government's broader reform of Western Australia's highly regulated on-demand transport industry to meet changing consumer expectations. Current rules and regulations are far too prescriptive, complex and stifle innovation. The Government's reforms will create a level playing field for the industry, and a safe, reliable and affordable service to customers. Drivers will also have the choice to pay a transactional fee, rather than fixed weekly fees. The industry will continue to grow under the new measures, provided operators and plate owners and lessees move quickly to adapt.