

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**

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Manager Legislation and Compliance  
Department of State Growth  
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By email: [taxireview@stategrowth.tas.gov.au](mailto:taxireview@stategrowth.tas.gov.au)

Dear Ms Mills

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the Taxi and Hire Vehicle Industries Regulations 2023.

I provide limited comment, outlining the issues as observed via complaints and enquiries to Equal Opportunity Tasmania.

**Demand of wheelchair accessible taxis**

People who use a wheelchair continue to be affected by wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT) shortages. The issue is well understood and widespread, being reflected in both local and national media reporting.

For the purposes of Tasmania, I have received complaints and enquiries relating specifically to long wait times and taxis not turning up. This of course, places individuals who rely on such means of transport (and who do not have the option of other public or private transport) in an incredibly vulnerable position.

To provide examples, complaints have been lodged under the *Anti-Discrimination Act 1998* (Tas) involving allegations that:

- an individual was subject to a verbal confrontation and refused service, leaving them stranded after the WAT operator refused to allow them to face forward in the taxi (which is how they routinely travelled); and
- an individual was verbally abused by the WAT operator for needing a WAT after 9:30pm.

Multiple enquiries have been received with allegations that:

- bookings are accepted for a WAT but do not turn up or turn up hours late, including individuals needing to repeatedly call for a WAT, to be told one will arrive, but no WAT arriving and the individual being left stranded
- refusals to provide taxis for individuals on the basis that they use a wheelchair
- taxi operator insisting that an individual in a wheelchair is positioned in an unsafe way in a WAT
- taxi operator refusing to go up a driveway to pick up individual who needed a WAT
- taxi operator refusing to transport a mobility device due to it being too large (where it had been transported previously)

I understand the regulations do not provide any frameworks or minimum standards for training and education of drivers. Informed by complaints and enquiries made to my office, I would propose that standards of conduct and education relating to the provision of accessible services would be a useful and constructive way of addressing discriminatory behaviours exhibited towards people needing WATs.

Further, it is evident that communication with people who make bookings for WATs needs to be improved. The uncertainty which occurs as a result of taxi companies failing to fulfil bookings for WATs is not acceptable. No individual should be left in distress and stranded after making a booking.

I am supportive of improvements to the industry which will enable these issues to be addressed however I note that technical improvements will not address all issues within the profession, such as abusive conduct being directed towards individuals needing WATS.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please contact me on (03) 6165 7515 or [EOT.Commissioner@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au](mailto:EOT.Commissioner@equalopportunity.tas.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Sarah Bolt**  
ANTI-DISCRIMINATION COMMISSIONER

17 May 2023