

Point to point transport

NSW Government reforms | Regional Access and Inclusion

Since 2015, the NSW Government has delivered customer-centred and outcome-focused reforms to enable a more adaptive, innovative and competitive market for point to point transport, resulting in both customer and safety benefits.

The changes in response to the Point to Point Transport Independent Review 2020 will deliver more choice for customers by freeing the supply of taxi licences and supporting cheaper taxi fares. They will help to level the playing field for all parts of the point to point transport industry and also help to deliver the NSW Government's *Future Transport Strategy 2056* by enabling point to point transport services that are customer-focused, safe and accessible.

Point to point transport services play a key role in connecting residents to regional centres for social activities, employment opportunities and essential services, while also providing transport around local towns for those who need it.

These reforms will pave the way for more choice for our regional customers. Fewer restrictions on the services that can be provided will encourage new and innovative service models that can better meet customer needs. Point to point transport service providers will be in a better position to respond to the needs of local communities and will be empowered to structure their business models in a way that suits local demand.

The NSW Government is committed to ensuring wheelchair accessible services are available and affordable for customers who need them. These changes build on the increased support for wheelchair accessible services that were introduced in 2016, including subsidising the cost of a central booking service, increased subsidies for people eligible for the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme, increased incentive payments for drivers and an expansion of the interest free loans.



Sustaining point to point services in regional locations

Most people in regional NSW get around in their own vehicles. However, there are people who do not have access to private cars and the local population may not be sufficient to support sustainable public transport services.

Coordinated point to point transport and community transport can work together to meet the needs of people in these situations. A number of initiatives and programs will support the sustainability of point to point transport services in regional areas:

- > Where regional communities are at risk of losing point to point transport services, Transport for NSW will work with them on a case by case basis to determine how to best meet their transport needs.
- > Existing community transport providers and potential new entrants will be encouraged to become authorised booking service providers and to examine opportunities to make better use of existing but under-utilised transport resources.
- > Point to point transport businesses will be supported through business advice, advice on opportunities to participate in government programs or initiatives to meet transport needs and will be encouraged to partner with other transport providers.
- > The NSW Government's Business Connect services will continue to provide free business advice and support to both point to point transport providers and community transport program participants. Transport for NSW will work with Regional NSW in addressing the transport needs of regional communities.

These activities align with existing government initiatives such as the Community Transport Program and the Transport Access Regional Partnerships Grants Program, which support initiatives to improve services and outcomes for transport disadvantaged groups in rural and regional communities.

Transport for NSW is also supporting community transport providers with a digital uplift to support service provision, rolling out dynamic scheduling capacity and offering mobile booking apps, mobility-as-a-service capability and cloud-based data analytics. This assists providers with the work they do under their contract with Transport for NSW, as well as enabling them to expand their commercial offerings.

Expanding the reach of the Point to Point Transport Commissioner

Over time it is expected that the number of taxis available across NSW will increase as a result of these reforms. To support the safety of point to point customers, the NSW Government is providing more than \$50 million over ten years in additional funding to the Point to Point Transport Commissioner. This will include expanding the Commissioner's educational and compliance activities in regional areas for new and existing services.



Supporting transport access and inclusion

A Smartcard will continue to be rolled out to make the current Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme easier to use for eligible customers with a severe and permanent disability. This tap-and-go card is reducing the time it takes customers to process the subsidy at trip completion.

This is the first step towards a provider neutral approach to subsidies and incentives to make more point to point transport services available for customers with a disability, including wheelchair accessible services.

Supporting access to wheelchair accessible services

Freely available taxi licences will remove one of the current incentives for putting a wheelchair accessible taxi (WAT) on the road. This is because WAT licences are already available for no fee. In light of this, the NSW Government will explore options to support the ongoing provision of wheelchair accessible services across NSW.

Incentives and subsidies will be made available to all authorised point to point transport providers with wheelchair accessible vehicles as they add these vehicles to their fleets.

How will these changes assist customers?

Customers with a disability will benefit from the opportunity to choose between taxis and hire vehicles (including wheelchair accessible vehicles). The new Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme Smartcard will support new arrangements to monitor the fares charged for these journeys and support ongoing protection of customers' consumer rights. The NSW Government will also expand the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme to other point to point transport service providers in the future.

Further information

Transport for NSW will inform stakeholders as the changes are introduced. Information will also be available on the Transport for NSW website. Any questions may be emailed to pointtopoint@transport.nsw.gov.au