

## Motor Vehicle Registry Information Bulletin

# CPV21 - Northern Territory Taxi Subsidy Scheme (NTTSS)

## What is the Taxi Subsidy Scheme?

The Northern Territory Taxi Subsidy Scheme (NTTSS) is administered by the Department of Lands and Planning (DLP) and is designed to provide financial assistance to people assessed as having a disability or significant mobility restriction that prevents them from being able to use public transport to access the community. The disability may be physical, sensory, psychiatric or intellectual. The NTTSS is intended to assist members with their transport needs *but is not intended to meet all transport costs*.

The scheme provides eligible members with a subsidy of 50% or one half of a taxi fare and membership is given to those who fully meet one of the six eligibility criteria listed below.

Applicants for the NTTSS *must* be permanent residents of the Northern Territory. The scheme operates throughout the Northern Territory and members of the scheme may use any approved taxi operator.

Membership of the scheme cannot be transferred to or from other States and Territories. If an NT member is travelling interstate they may apply to DLP for interstate vouchers.

## Am I eligible for the taxi subsidy scheme?

To be eligible for membership of the NTTSS you must:

1. be a permanent resident of the Northern Territory; and
2. be unable to safely utilise public transport due to one of the following:
  - Dependence on a wheelchair / mobility device for all mobility outside of the home.
  - Significant mobility restrictions as the result of a permanent disability.
  - Significant visual impairment in both eyes.
  - Severe and uncontrollable epilepsy, with seizures involving loss of consciousness.
  - Significant intellectual disability, memory or communication impairment.
  - Significant psychiatric disability

Remote area applicants may be eligible to access the scheme to support their transport when visiting urban centres.

## How to apply for membership

If you think you are eligible, you must first:

- print a taxi subsidy application from the website [www.nt.gov.au/taxisubsidy](http://www.nt.gov.au/taxisubsidy); or
- contact the Taxi Subsidy Scheme Officer to arrange an application to be posted to you.

Then:

- complete Part A of the application;
- visit a medical practitioner or allied health professional and have them complete Part B of the application;
- attach two (2) passport size photographs (1 must be certified);

- provide proof of your permanent NT residential address ie photocopy of your current Centrelink card, current NT Driver Licence, Rates Notice (within last 6 months), or Utilities account ie Power / Water (within last 6 months) showing current residential address; and
- mail the completed application and associated paperwork to the Taxi Subsidy Scheme Officer, GPO Box 2520, Darwin NT 0801

Applications will be assessed on an individual case by case basis. If approved, you will be notified by post. You will be sent information about how the scheme works along with your photographic NTTSS smartcard.

## How does the taxi subsidy scheme work?

The scheme provides eligible members with a subsidy of 50% or one half of a taxi fare. The other half of the fare is to be paid in cash and / or credit/debit card by the member.

There are five categories of benefit (A, B, B MPV, C and D). Eligibility for each category is based on the assessed need of the applicant and applications may be approved on a permanent or temporary basis depending on the disability and or inability to use public transport.

After approval of an application every new member of the taxi subsidy scheme is issued with an electronic smartcard which is embedded with a microchip. The microchip will store only the member number, card number, and membership start and expiry dates. Each time the smartcard is used the subsidy balance will be updated.

## About the electronic smartcard

Each member is issued with a NTTSS smartcard. The smartcard is designed to help protect the members' subsidy by ensuring that only the correct subsidy amount for a taxi trip is deducted from the card. As a further safeguard the new smartcard will display the member's digital photo, similar to a photo on a driver licence.

Note:

- It is your responsibility to keep your smartcard in a safe place, for example, place your card in your bag, wallet or purse.
- If your smartcard is lost or stolen **you must** notify the Taxi Subsidy Scheme Officer immediately to have it cancelled and a new card reordered. Process takes approximately 10 working days.

## How much will I pay for travel?

When you use the card it will pay up to 50% of your taxi fare (subject to your card balance). You will pay the other half of the fare at the end of each journey.

## How do I use the smartcard?

**NTTSS members:**

- At the beginning of each journey, you may provide your smartcard to the taxi driver and request a subsidy balance from the driver. The smartcard is your only proof that you are an authorised member of the scheme. If you cannot produce your smartcard you will have to pay the full taxi fare.
- Upon arrival at your destination, you will hand your smartcard to the driver. The driver will insert the smartcard into the EFTPOS terminal for the duration of the transaction.
- Transactions are limited to 50% of the total fare per journey and the subsidies amount cannot exceed the member's available balance. You must pay half the fare amount by either cash and/or credit/card.

- Once the transaction is completed, you will be provided with a receipt which will show the new subsidy balance. It is your responsibility to check the details – for example, check that correct fare has been charged.
- Temporary members are not permitted to use their smartcard after the expiry date printed on the card.
- After the journey you must remember to take your card with you.

#### Drivers:

- You are required to check that the smartcard photo matches the passenger being carried (the member of the scheme) in the vehicle.
- At the beginning of each journey, you can conduct a balance enquiry by inserting the NTTSS card in the smartcard reader (EFTPOS terminal) and following the prompts on the display. This process will validate the membership and allow the subsidy to be automatically deducted from the fare at the end of the trip.
- Transactions are limited to 50% of the total fare per journey and the member must pay half the fare amount by either cash and/or credit/card. This type of card needs to be inserted in the EFTPOS terminal and left in place until the transaction is completed.
- As at 30 June 2009 you can **NOT** accept the old paper vouchers eligible members must provide the smartcard to access the TSS.
- The transactions are processed electronically through the terminal. The taxi operator will pay you in a similar manner as you are for other transactions that you process through the terminal.
- If your EFTPOS terminal is faulty or the network system is down you are permitted to use an emergency CABCHARGE docket provided to your network by DLP. Your EFTPOS terminal must be repaired as soon as possible.
- You are **NOT** permitted to use an emergency docket if the smartcard has expired, is damaged or in any other way faulty.
- At the end of the journey you must return the smartcard to the member of the scheme, or the member's carer.

## What happens if there is a problem with the new system?

In situations where the electronic system has problems, the taxi driver will be able to use a paper based back-up system, similar to the existing Cabcharge green slips. A specific NTTSS emergency docket has been developed for this purpose.

The NTTSS emergency dockets are forwarded to the Taxi Subsidy Scheme Officer and are accepted and processed if the slip meets strict policy requirements. For example, an emergency docket will not be accepted for expired or damaged smartcards.

Emergency dockets will only be used in situations where the system is down or in-taxi equipment has failed and the failure can be substantiated.

## What happens if there is a problem with the member's NTTSS smartcard?

The smartcards are robust and should not become damaged through normal use. If however the card is damaged or faulty, the smartcard reader PINpad screen will provide prompts and information about the problem to the driver.

Emergency dockets must **NOT** be used for damaged smartcards, the member of the scheme will be required to pay the full taxi fare.

The member of the scheme can contact the Taxi Subsidy Scheme Officer for the smartcard to be tested and for a refund to be given on the subsidised amount of the taxi fare. Refunds are given on the condition the passenger is a valid member of the scheme at the time of the taxi trip and the card is found to be faulty. A receipt should be obtained from the taxi driver for proof of fare payment.

## Where can I travel?

You can travel in cities, towns and country areas throughout the Northern Territory. Members may use any taxi service in the Northern Territory, but all journeys must be traveled by the shortest route.

## Can I travel outside the state?

Members of the scheme can apply by phone for specific interstate travel vouchers for use in other States and Territories of Australia.

## Can a friend travel with me?

Other people may travel in the taxi, but only when you, the member of the scheme is in the taxi. The NTTSS smartcard is to be used for the member's personal travel only, it cannot be used for sending other people on errands or parcel deliveries.

## Wheelchair accessible taxis

In addition to conventional standard taxis, vehicles specially modified to accept wheelchairs are increasingly being made available. Where wheelchair accessible taxis are available, people using wheelchairs will be given first priority. This is a specific condition of the Multiple Purpose Taxi license issued by the Department of Lands and Planning.

## I am an NTTSS member in a category A, or B MPV and am reliant on a wheelchair – will I be allocated the Lift Incentive?

Yes. Category A and B MPV members will be eligible under the Lift Incentive Scheme (LIS) so that drivers of MPTs are provided with the \$10 lift incentive. After approval of the application, the Lift Incentive allocation will be able to be deducted from the electronic smartcard.

For further information, refer to [Information Bulletin CPV20- Lift Incentive](#).

## Where can I find out more?

Further details are available during business hours from the Taxi Subsidy Scheme Officer in the Commercial Passenger Vehicles Branch of the Department of Planning and Infrastructure on telephone 8924 7580.

<b>Contact Details</b>	
<b>Commercial Passenger Vehicles Branch</b>	
Telephone	(08) 892 47580
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