

Ensuring safe journeys for all on regional roads podcast - Transcript

Marcus Binet: Welcome to Get to the Point, a podcast series by the New South Wales Point to Point Transport Commissioner.

The Commissioner is the independent regulator for point to point transport in New South Wales. In this series, you will hear from industry representatives, and from subject matter experts as we explore topics relevant to point to point transport and work together to ensure a safer industry.

Hello, I'm your host Marcus Binet. Today we are in the regional centre of Dubbo discussing safe point to point transport on regional roads. Driving too fast is the single biggest contributor to death and injury on NSW roads. Each year, 135 lives are lost, and 1,141 people are seriously injured as a result of speeding.

To discuss these important topics, I'm joined by Andrea Hamilton Vaughan, the Road Safety Officer for the City of Orange and Cabonne Shire Council; Geoff Ferris, Chairman of the Country Taxi Operators Association; and Danielle Edwards, the Commissioner's Regional Education and Engagement Officer. Thanks for being here. It's great having you.

Before we begin, I'd like to introduce local Wiradjuri man, Check Jamal Reid, who will conduct a Welcome to Country.

Check' Jamahl Reid: Hello everyone. Welcome today. My name is Jamal Reid. I'm a proud Wiradjuri man. I was born on Wiradjuri Country, and I've lived here my whole life. When I do a welcome to country, it's an acknowledgement of the ancestors, past and present. It also acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders of the land, the younger generation, the children coming through.

It's just to pay respects to all of the traditional owners and custodians of this land. It's not only the land when you come to Aboriginal Country, it's the waters, it's the mountains, it's the wildlife, it's the flora, the fauna, its culture. When you travel across our land, whether you came here to just visit the beautiful areas of our Country, please show respect. It's just the same as I visit your land. If you welcome me to your house, it's the same respect. So, welcome everyone, welcome to our country, welcome to Wiradjuri land. Thank you.

Marcus Binet: Welcome Geoff. It's good to have you.

Geoff Ferris: Thank you Marcus. Pleased to be here.

Marcus Binet: Welcome Andrea.

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: Thank you for inviting me. It's a pleasure.

Marcus Binet: And welcome Danielle.

Danielle Edwards: Thank you, Marcus.

Marcus Binet: So, just to start with, Andrea, can you tell us about the main hazards that you think people face, driving on regional roads?

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: Regional roads are not like our city cousins, which are nice and trim with kerb and guttering. Regional roads are a challenge. Five minutes out of town, every road is 100 kilometres an hour. Which means that if you get into trouble, the consequences are dire because the human body can only tolerate a crash at 70km an hour. And of course, there's other hazards too; wildlife, cattle and horses getting out of paddocks. So, there's a lot going on regional roads.

Marcus Binet: Do you find drivers come here from the city? Do you ever find that where they'll come out and it's a whole new environment for them and they're not familiar with that?

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: There's two sides to that story. Local people die on local roads and that's a statistic that's right across the board, whether you're in Sydney or Melbourne or regional areas. But then when people from the city come out here, there are those extra obstacles that they're not ready for; but at the same time, they're a little bit more cautious than the locals.

Marcus Binet: Yes, that makes sense. Do you find it, Geoff, that it's more of a consideration in regional areas than in the city areas?

Geoff Ferris: Certainly, the issue of fatigue in country areas. You're doing greater distances in the taxi industry particularly - you would do one way fares, unlike the city where I get a fare at the end of my job. When I drive out of town, 25 kilometres, I've got a 25 kilometre trip back on my own, which is when fatigue can set in - when there's no one around, there's no one to talk to. So, we do a lot more individual driving in the regional areas than we do in the city in taxi.

Marcus Binet: That's interesting. What about wildlife?

Geoff Ferris: Wildlife is a big concern, particularly night driving. The unpredictability of wildlife means that we've always got to be alert, expecting something to happen.

Marcus Binet: Yes. Do you find you ever get people asking you to speed, or do your drivers ever tell you that?

Geoff Ferris: Oh, for sure. I don't want to miss my plane, I don't want to miss my train, I promised my mates I'd be at the pub at five o'clock. I want to be there at

five or I'll have to shout (the drinks) when I get there. Those sorts of things. I'm the professional driver I can do that – that's what they think. Yeah. I know you've got to catch your plane but, in the end, I've got to get you there safely. I've also got to obey the law and be a safe driver.

Marcus Binet: Yes. Is there any specific guidance that you give to drivers on regional roads?

Geoff Ferris: For sure, we talk to drivers. We have drivers' meetings within our networks and also the operators themselves - that talk about the added hazards of driving on rural roads. In the city it's better lit, there are traffic lights to keep you alert, you have to think more. When you're out on a regional road doing 100 kilometres an hour, 80 kilometres an hour, you haven't got the same stimuli to your eyes or anything else, so you are sitting back in a possibly more relaxed way than you are in a metropolitan environment with a lot of lights and changing scenery.

Marcus Binet: Yes. What about the council, in your role, Andrea. Do you come across guidance that you may give to people driving on regional roads, that's different from what you might see in the city?

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: I think it's very important that we obey the speed limit, and we ask our drivers to drive to the conditions, which is a requirement in New South Wales. Every five or ten k's over the speed limit doubles your risk of being in a crash. And the hardest thing to teach people is that perception that an extra five or ten. There's no such thing as safe speeding. And it's very easy to get that speed creep on rural roads, where, as Geoff had pointed out, there's not that stimuli to say that you are creeping up over the speed limit. You need to concentrate on that speed and keep to the speed limit.

Marcus Binet: And what was interesting before we were talking about the roadworks around here, and you mentioned driving to the conditions, and that's a big one with all the roadworks that are going on at the moment.

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: Roadworks are a necessary evil. We all want the roads to be better, and the only way you can get them better is to actually do roadworks. And the guidance that you are given about the speed limit at roadworks should be, and must be, adhered to. Even when there's not workmen there, there'll be certain hazards that you may not detect with your own vision and your own knowledge. That speed limit is there for a specific reason. And that's so you can react to any hazards etc.

Marcus Binet: Yes. And you mentioned too, Geoff, people wanting to get around buses and around trucks.

Geoff Ferris: Yes, that's right. Out on regional roads particularly, the trucks, heavy vehicles, and buses, they are speed limited to 100km an hour. Now, on

roads where you can do 100 or 110km/h, people want to pass them - they don't want to sit behind them. So, they take a risk. A lot of average drivers take risks to get in front of heavy vehicles, and that creates more risk for other road users.

Marcus Binet: Yes, and then that leads into the other big one that we've already touched on slightly - fatigue and the fact that the point to point industry, because it operates 24-7, people can get tired any time of the day or night. What do you think is the most dangerous time of the day, Geoff?

Geoff Ferris: Oh, for sure it is in the early hours of the morning, coming up particularly to dawn, if you're doing an overnight shift or an early morning shift, your body clock and circadian rhythms tell you that you should be asleep, and here you are working. Even if you do it regularly, your body clock is not always in sync with what you are doing and at dawn, particularly when the sun is coming up and the bright light is starting to come up, your eyes have got to adjust to the change in light conditions.

Marcus Binet: Yes. That's between that three to six.

Geoff Ferris: Three to six.

Marcus Binet: Yeah, the dawn time. And there's more accidents, you were saying Andrea?

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: Oh, there's definitely an increase of crashes and fatalities, especially driver fatigue, at that particular point in the morning. If a driver is starting to heavy blink, and then they're starting to fight, to keep their eyes open, they're in danger of falling into a micro-sleep. That is the biggest red flag. You need to pull over somewhere safe and have a 15 to 20 minute power nap. And a power nap is a short sleep that terminates before deep sleep. You don't want to go into deep sleep because then when you wake up, you're going to be just as groggy. It's very effective. Heavy vehicle drivers use it a lot. Taxi drivers, if they're caught in that situation, 15 to 20 minutes. And not everyone has to go into a deep sleep. If I go and use a power nap, I can still hear the radio because I don't even bother turning it off. But it still improves my situation, awareness, and my concentration.

Marcus Binet: What other things, Geoff, can drivers do to manage this better?

Geoff Ferris: Be aware, is the first thing Marcus. Know that if I'm working a night shift, I've got to be aware of my fatigue. And tonight, I'm fine. Tomorrow night, I've had the same amount of sleep, but I'm just in a different pattern. I can see the difference in myself. Maybe I've got to have a rest, get out of the car, walk around, go and have a drink, a bit of water, a bit of coffee, whatever you like to just revitalise or reinvigorate your body and get out of the car and out of that situation, taking some fresh air. And as Andrea said, it doesn't have to be a long time. It's just a break to get that oxygen and move around and get back in again -

and all of a sudden, you'll feel a lot better, but you've got to be conscious of your own body and what it's telling you.

Marcus Binet: Do you think people know when they get tired?

Geoff Ferris: Yes, they should. We talk to our drivers in the taxi industry - particularly because we do so much night driving - about fatigue and what are the signs and as I said before, one of the problems is the second return of every trip we're on our own so that's when you'll particularly notice it and you've got to be watching for it. So that's why you've got to understand the signs of fatigue and you will know yourself when you're not feeling what you should be feeling or what you felt yesterday and you are tired today and lethargic, you don't want to move. Get out and get moving and get back in again and continue your shift when you feel better.

Marcus Binet: Yes.

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: I think Geoff is right. The variables change from day to day - and that's why fatigue is a hard thing to manage. When you start to feel tired and you're yawning and you can't concentrate, when you get that heavy blinking and you're starting to fight to keep your eyes open, you're trying to open them up, to me, after talking to hundreds of truck drivers, that's the red line. That's when you've got to, regardless of where you are, pull over somewhere and have that 15 to 20 minute power nap. That is the trigger before you fall into a microsleep. And the trouble with microsleeps is too, once you get to that point, if you try and fight the fatigue the body won't let you fight it. It will shut down sooner or later. It's just a matter of time.

Marcus Binet: Yes. Danielle, tell us about fatigue from the perspective of the regulation.

Danielle Edwards: Yeah. Fatigue is obviously an issue in our industry as we've already identified. And as Andrea and Geoff were saying, that whole concept of being proactive about it, prevention's better than cure, obviously. Some of the signs and things that we should be aware of are things like consistent yawning, veering off the road. Maintaining consistent speed - we might have difficulty with that, difficulty concentrating. We'll start to feel a little bit more irritable and things like that. That can vary from individual to individual, but being aware of those signs, knowing your body and what your capacities are as a driver is really important.

Marcus Binet: Yes. And that's interesting. You were talking before, Geoff, about training. That's the kind of stuff that you would cover when you're doing the training of your drivers, isn't it?

Geoff Ferris: Some drivers say, I work night shift. I'm always tired. You can do it a little tired, but you've got to understand when it's fatigue. That is when it impairs

what you are doing. That's why we talk to our drivers about knowing what fatigue is. As we've got a set of rules to abide by and we can close drivers out of dispatch systems. But that's after you've driven five and a quarter hours. I may be fatigued today after three hours. And so, I can't wait for five and a quarter (hours) to say, now I should have a break. That is the maximum amount of driving I can do. And there's minimum rest periods. But that doesn't mean I've got to drive for five and a quarter (hours) before I have a break. I've got to know what fatigue is. for myself. When I know what it is for myself, I can do something about it.

Marcus Binet: That's a really good point. So, these are the sorts of things that service providers would have in a safety management system. So, what is the SMS and what role does it play in keeping everyone safe, Danielle?

Danielle Edwards: A safety management system (SMS) is used to identify and record any foreseeable risks or hazards that may occur during passenger service. It's a record and a way to determine how we can minimise those risks or hazards from occurring, and it would list those steps on how that would occur. It's a condition of authorisation. Service providers need to have a safety management system.

Marcus Binet: And would fatigue management generally be being mentioned specifically in there?

Danielle Edwards: Yes, a fatigue management policy would be included and it's particularly important for service providers in regional areas. Fatigue is the second greatest cause of fatality on regional roads. Being awake for 17 hours is the equivalent of being under the influence of alcohol or having a blood alcohol concentration of 0.05 (g%). So, it's quite serious.

Marcus Binet: Okay. So, being awake straight for 17 hours is like having a blood alcohol level of 0.05 (g%)?

Danielle Edwards: That's correct.

Marcus Binet: Wow.

Geoff Ferris: The safety management system has a lot of components. Maintenance of my vehicle, and that can be a schedule, and as long as I adhere that schedule, I service every 10,000 kilometres or every month or whatever it is, I check the brakes, I check the steering, it's a schedule.

The fatigue management - it's really something we've got to 'live by' every day. It's not a piece of paper that sits in the back of a folder and says, that's the fatigue management. It's making sure the drivers understand that the fatigue management is about what they do, working. They can only drive a maximum of five hours, five and a quarter maybe, in one hit. They've got to have rest breaks.

They've got to be good rest breaks. It's not sitting in a car, listening to the radio, waiting for the next job, waiting for the next passenger wondering "Is this passenger going to get in the car"? It's about having a break. It's about only working 12 hours maximum driving in any one shift. So, I've got to live by the fatigue management. It's not a piece of paper that's written down with a whole heap of rules on it that I never look at again. I've got to 'live by' it. And so that's why fatigue is really the backbone of the safety management system for the driver. And the operator's got to make sure that each driver understands that.

Marcus Binet: It's interesting you say, 'live by it', because it really is a safety issue, isn't it? The service provider needs to protect the safety of their drivers, and the drivers need to be aware that it's their own safety that's at risk if they're tired.

Geoff Ferris: Accidents happen. It means the car is off the road. It means that people could be injured, but more importantly, I could be injured and not capable of earning income for the next week, the next month, or the next day, whatever it is. So that's why it's how we've got to live our life as a taxi driver - understanding my fatigue, and how I feel. And it's not going to be the same every day. I may be fatigued today after a three hour (shift). Tomorrow I might work for four hours, or five hours and I feel fine. But it's knowing what the difference to my body is and how I feel.

Marcus Binet: And what about people who drive as a secondary job?

Geoff Ferris: It's another component of fatigue management. The nature of a taxi driver is it lends itself to being a casual job. And we often need extra drivers of a weekend when we're busy than what we need on the earlier nights during the week. That by its sheer nature, we have drivers who work only Friday and Saturday nights. Who may work Saturday and Sunday. And they may have another job during the week or another couple of casual jobs. So, we've got to look at how that affects, my fatigue management when I am driving a taxi. How did I start the shift? Was I well rested? Was I not? And that doesn't mean I may have been home and had a rest. Is the stress of my midweek job taking its toll on my body of a weekend where I start tired and that will affect my fatigue when I'm driving a taxi. It's not a piece of paper that says I'm good to drive for five hours if I don't feel good.

Marcus Binet: Yes, if you were to look at it just as a driver you might say oh yes, I've started at three I've only been driving for four hours but if you've worked a full eight hour shift before that, it's a whole different game.

Geoff Ferris: And we now as a taxi industry ask our drivers to declare their secondary employment. It doesn't mean we won't employ you, but it may well mean we're not going to give you a shift that goes past 1am. You may have to be off the road by 1am where other drivers will go through to 3, 4 or 5(am).

But if you've worked the day before, you've got to have a good rest in the 24 hour period.

Marcus Binet: Are you finding you're getting more people in that situation now, because there is a driver shortage at the moment? Are you getting more people coming in looking for secondary employment?

Geoff Ferris: The problem at the moment is every industry is short of staff. I wouldn't say there's more than normal, we could do with some more, but there is also a job if you go into any shop, there's a sign up that says they want shop staff, every barista has got a sign up to say they need help in the coffee shop, every pub has got a job for someone behind the bar, so there's a lot of casual work now, and I think a lot of industries are becoming casualised. This means I may be a barman Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or barista Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, but I like to drive a taxi Thursday, Friday, Saturday, because I make good money. So, we've got to consider that secondary employment. It doesn't mean you can't do it. It means we must manage that as an operator. Under my accreditation, I've got to make sure that when my drivers come to work, that they are suitably rested before they start, and understand how fatigue affects them individually.

Marcus Binet: Yes, does that have an impact on, with the way you see it Andrea, in terms of your role in road safety, the secondary employment issue, does that come up?

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: It plays a role in fatigue management because if they're tired, they're more likely to crash. However, having a second job is not unknown. It's a variable out there. And as Geoff has mentioned, some people are better suited to be able to work later at night than others. It's all an individual case by case situation.

Marcus Binet: Okay. So, moving on to another big topic in the region: vehicle maintenance. That's obviously another responsibility of the service provider - to make sure your vehicles are properly maintained and properly looked after. What's the regulation perspective on it, Danielle?

Danielle Edwards: Ensuring that the vehicle is roadworthy and registered, that's really important. Undergoing an annual safety check, also previously known as a pink slip, that's completed irrespective of the age of the vehicle. So even if it's under five years, a safety check is done. Staying on top of the maintenance and repairs of the vehicle and having that documented in the safety management system - having records of that being completed.

Marcus Binet: So again, it's another part of the safety management system. Yes.

Danielle Edwards: Absolutely.

Marcus Binet: And how does that work out on the ground, Geoff?

Geoff Ferris: As a network, running a network of taxis, where that'd be 2, 3 taxis or 30 taxis, the authorised booking service provider has a requirement to make sure all the vehicles working under its control meet those requirements. So, in the networks that I'm involved with, we ask that all the licensed operators, have to actually send to us their maintenance records and we file them by vehicle. We know that what we agreed to do in our safety management system is being carried out. If we said we're going to service every 10,000 kilometres or every four weeks, we make sure that we're meeting that requirement and the vehicles are being checked. And therefore, we know they're roadworthy. We also do, in our networks, some additional spot checks of our vehicles - to make sure not only are they safe, but they're well presented to the customer.

Marcus Binet: Are there any issues around vehicle maintenance that you think would be more prominent regionally than would be the case in the city?

Geoff Ferris: We do a lot more high speed work, so we want to make sure vehicles are safe on the open road. As Andrea said before, I'm 10 minutes out of any country town, probably five minutes in many, and I'm doing 100 kilometres an hour. Bar the freeways in the metropolitan areas, I could be driving around the eastern suburbs of Sydney or Melbourne, western suburbs, and never get over 60 kilometres an hour. So if I'm going to drive down the Newell Highway at 110 kilometres an hour on a job, I want to make sure that the tyres are good, that the suspension and steering is good, and is quite capable of handling that sort of road.

Marcus Binet: Yes. What's the council's approach, because I would imagine they have a lot of vehicles that they would need to obviously maintain as well?

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: Look, it's a very important part of your safety management system to have well maintained vehicles. Orange City Council and Cabonne Council only have five-star vehicles in their fleet, but there's no point having five-star cars if there's no tread on the tyres, because your tread on your tyres affects your ABS braking capability, etc. So, you can have all the whistles and all the 'mod cons', but something as basic as tyre tread will make your safety features less capable of doing the job. So, we have a very strict policy, every 10,000 Ks, we change our tyres (and we turn our) vehicles over on a regular basis, usually about 60 to 80,000 Ks -we get new vehicles. And that's good for our communities too. If we're having five-star cars, that means in the marketplace, when we put them out to be sold and get new cars, there are other members of the community who may not be able to afford a brand new car, are buying a second hand five-star car, which has all the safety features.

Marcus Binet: Yes, and so there's the service provider aspect of it, but there's also the driver aspect of it as well, isn't there, Danielle?

Danielle Edwards: Yes, there is. Drivers can also assist in that process by doing a pre-departure check before commencing their shift. You know, having a look over the vehicle, checking that wipers work, checking that the tyres are in good condition, that the oil is topped up, things like that. But drivers also have responsibilities in terms of their conduct and how they act as drivers. They have a duty of care, so they must not act, or fail to act, in a way that's going to endanger themselves or passengers - or other people on the road. They need to be aware of the safety standards that apply to them. They will have slightly different obligations to those who are licensed holders, a TSP, or a vehicle owner. So being aware of those variations and knowing what their obligations are (is important). And of course, the basics which apply to all road users, but it's particularly important for taxi drivers as part of this industry: Not driving under the influence of alcohol, not driving under the influence of drugs, no smoking in the vehicle, no touting or soliciting, not refusing people who have assistance animals or a disability, that sort of thing. So, there are lots of obligations that apply from a safety perspective to drivers as well.

Marcus Binet: Hmm, yes. So, it starts at the highest level, and it gradually works its way down, where the service provider has responsibility, and it works its way down to the driver.

Geoff Ferris: Marcus, I never drive my taxi, but I need the driver to tell me when there's something wrong with it.

Marcus Binet: Yes.

Geoff Ferris: And so, if the brakes need to be looked at, because they're concerned, they need to put a defect report in so we can have a mechanic look at it. It's no use going out tomorrow and finding they're not working, or the steering's, not tight. We need the drivers to have their role in the safety management system to say there is a problem or potential problem. Can it be looked at?

Marcus Binet: Yes. And do you have onboarding training for new drivers?

Geoff Ferris: Very much so. And we take the drivers through their responsibility and the method of how they report a defect. We have a defect reporting system and (show them) what they do with that. So, the next driver knows, before it goes out, the vehicle needs to be looked at - and they can contact the operator and either put a spare vehicle on or keep that vehicle home until it's been checked.

Marcus Binet: Training would also cover the things that which Danielle was talking about - things like what you can and can't do, what you should and shouldn't be doing, that whole thing. So, they (drivers) all know exactly what's expected yeah.

Geoff Ferris: Very much so.

Marcus Binet: Excellent. So just in summarising before we close up, I'd like to ask you two questions. The first one is, what would be your top three tips for service providers operating in regional areas? Geoff, do you want to start?

Geoff Ferris: Making sure that we deliver a safe service.

Marcus Binet: Yes.

Geoff Ferris: And what's the components of that? Making sure we drive to conditions - our drivers drive to conditions; our drivers understand the effect of fatigue on themselves - and we maintain our vehicle in a safe manner according to our safety management system.

Marcus Binet: Excellent. Andrea?

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: I have to agree with Geoff on drive to conditions. I think that's very important on country roads because there are various hazards - and speed management is really important. The outcome of a crash is all to do with speed. So, driving a little bit under the speed limit, there is a great benefit. Another top tip would be fatigue management. How will I manage my driver fatigue today? Because today, and tomorrow, and the next day, it's all going to be a little bit different, and you need to manage that personally.

Marcus Binet: Danielle?

Danielle Edwards: For service providers in regional areas, particularly that their safety management system covers risks that are pertinent to the roads in their area and regional risks. That they take fatigue management very seriously and that they're following through with their obligation to educate drivers on: okay, if I start a shift and I get tired, what do I do in the event that happens? And also maintaining vehicle checks (to make sure) that the vehicles are safe to drive in regional areas.

Marcus Binet: Okay, and then the other summary question is what should drivers do to keep themselves and their passengers safe, Geoff?

Geoff Ferris: The main issue is make sure they are aware of their own personal fatigue limits - and that can vary from day to day. There is a set of guidelines, there's driving-hour requirements and rest requirements, which are the guidelines. If I'm not up to that standard, I've got to know what my standard is today, how far can I go, when do I need to rest, and I may need extra rest today than what I needed yesterday. Make sure I know my personal limits around what I can and cannot do.

Marcus Binet: Yes and recognising your own triggers around it. How do I know when I'm tired? Yes. Andrea?

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: Drive to survive. I think that sums it up. You need to take all the necessary precautions. Use your seatbelt and watch your speed management and your fatigue.

Marcus Binet: Danielle?

Danielle Edwards: For drivers, it's know your safety standards, know the safety policies that are put in place. And that you have a duty of care, not only to yourself, but to passengers. Acting in a safe way, the basics.

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: I think the taxi co-ops could take on the driving with your headlights on 24-hours a day. It reduces pedestrian crashes and intersection crashes. And because they're out on the road so much, and it's not because they need to. It's the other drivers that can be the problem. It just makes the road safer for everyone. And that's why many countries of the world it's a law that all drivers drive with their headlights on 24-7. I think it would make it a safer journey for the passenger and for the taxi driver, because any minor bingle, any minor crash, means the car's off the road for, you know, X amount of time to get repaired. So, it's good risk management tool to drive with your headlights on 2-7.

Marcus Binet: Yes. The guidelines and the regulation are not meant to be a complete list of everything you can do. There are other things like that.

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: It's a simple thing. It doesn't cost you anything, but can save you heaps.

Marcus Binet: Yes, and Geoff, any closing comments?

Geoff Ferris: Look, Marcus, I think what we started with, there's some regulations in place that have been put in by the point to point commission. We as operators have accepted them as part of our authorisation and accreditation, and we need to understand that working with drivers, that fatigue particularly is not something that has to be done because point to point commission said we have to do it. It is for my safety as a driver. It's for my passenger safety and it's for the operator to look after their vehicle and make sure they deliver a safe service. So, it's not an onerous thing that I have to do because the government tells me to. It's something I have to do as a good professional driver and for my own safety. I 'live by it' every day.

Marcus Binet: Absolutely. Danielle, any closing comments?

Danielle Edwards: Yeah, we've spoken a lot about driver's obligations. We've spoken a lot about TSP obligations. But I think it's also important to raise the fact that passengers can also contribute to their safety. Choosing a location for pick up and drop off that is free of hazards, that is also well lit. If it's not well lit, using the light on your phone to indicate where you are so the driver can find

you. Being aware of any hazards around you - there could be potholes, there could be a very limited amount of space for the driver to pull up. So, passengers can be aware of that. There are also 33 secure taxi ranks around New South Wales that passengers can make use of and should use as often as possible. Those are manned on a Friday and a Saturday night - that's something that passengers can make themselves familiar with.

Marcus Binet: Excellent. Well, that's good. Thanks very much. Thanks very much for coming Geoff.

Geoff Ferris: Thank you Marcus. Pleasure.

Marcus Binet: Thanks, Andrea.

Andrea Hamilton Vaughan: Thank you so much.

Marcus Binet: And thank you Danielle.

Danielle Edwards: Thank you.

Marcus Binet: Thank you again for sharing your knowledge and thoughts today, and I hope this session has been informative.

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