



Additional Assistance Payment Scheme Frequently Asked Questions

July 2018

What is the Additional Assistance Payments Scheme?

The NSW Government has allocated a maximum of \$142 million to an Additional Assistance Payments Scheme (AAPS). The Scheme is to provide additional assistance funds to people like taxi and hire car licence holders who have been detrimentally impacted by the changes to the regulation of point to point transport, particularly those in financial hardship.

Transport for NSW is responsible for administering the Scheme. The Taxi and Hire Vehicle Industries Assistance Panel (the Panel), which has oversight of the Scheme, has determined procedures for applications, will review all of the information received from applicants, and make recommendations to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure on criteria for payments of additional assistance funds.

As part of the application process, an applicant will need to detail their claim as to how they have been detrimentally impacted by the industry reforms. The applicant will need to provide information on their household income, net wealth (assets minus liabilities) and debts directly associated with their licence or operation of their industry business.

An application from a company will need to provide company details, financial statements and a summary on how the point to point transport industry reforms have detrimentally impacted them.

Transport for NSW may also require an applicant to provide further information or evidence in support of their application.

When will applications open?

Applications for the Scheme will open on Monday 2 July 2018 and will close on Monday 1 October 2018 (a 3 month period). Late applications will not be accepted. Only applications submitted during the application period can be considered for an additional assistance payment.

Who can apply?

To apply for an additional assistance payment, a person must:

- be involved in or connected with the taxi or passenger hire vehicle industry; or
- have been involved in or connected with the taxi or passenger hire vehicle industry as at 28 June 2016 (this is when parts of the new point to point transport law started); and
- be able to demonstrate that they have been detrimentally affected by the changes made to the regulation of the taxi and hire vehicle industries.

Persons who left the industry prior to 28 June 2016 are not eligible to apply for an assistance payment.

Would I be eligible for a payment?

The Scheme is limited to a maximum of \$142 million, and the NSW Government will be prioritising assistance for those who demonstrate the greatest financial hardship.

The Point to Point Transport Taskforce and the Panel have identified taxi licence holders as the industry segment most likely to have been detrimentally impacted by the reforms and may be most vulnerable to financial hardship, in particular:

- Holders of ordinary transferable taxi licences, particularly those at or near retirement with few other assets or sources of income.
- Taxi licence holders who have a high level of debt directly associated with their taxi licence or taxi business, and who may not be able to service their debt through income from their taxi licence or other income sources.

The Panel has also noted that it is widely recognised that individuals and households who have income and net assets below the eligible thresholds for the full or part age pension or similar would be likely to be the most vulnerable to financial hardship as a result of the reforms.

While the Scheme will be targeted at those persons who demonstrate the greatest financial hardship, each application will be considered on its merits as each individual's circumstances and how they have been impacted by the reforms will be different. The applicant will need to demonstrate in their application how they have been detrimentally impacted by the changes. All applications will be considered in accordance with the criteria set by the Panel.

What are the thresholds for the part age pension?

The Panel recommends that, when determining whether a person is suffering financial hardship the income and assets test for eligibility for the part aged pension (as set by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services) should be used as a guide – this is persons with a total annual family gross income of no more than \$79,050 (or no more than \$52,000 for an individual) with net assets of less than \$561,250 (where the applicant owns their own home) or net assets of \$768,250 (where the applicant does not own their own home). Income means gross ordinary income from all sources as defined at s8 and s1072 of the *Social Security Act 1991* (Cth).

These thresholds are recommended as a guide only, with assistance payments prioritised for those eligible applicants with the lowest incomes and the lowest net value assets who have been detrimentally impacted by the changes.

I'm a driver or hire vehicle / taxi operator or service provider, can I apply?

Anyone involved in or connected with the taxi or passenger hire vehicle industry may make an application for an assistance payment, however, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have been detrimentally affected by the changes made to the regulation of the taxi and hire vehicle industries.

The Taskforce considered the potential impacts of the reforms on other industry participants such as taxi drivers, taxi operators and taxi networks and concluded that "Financial assistance [to these groups] is not recommended" (refer Chapter 10 of [Taskforce report](#)).

The Taskforce concluded that “overall, the liberalisation of the booking market will improve the negotiating power of taxi drivers” and “taxi operators will benefit from many of the [reforms], such as the abolition of the requirement that they be affiliated with a network, reduction in the cost of leasing a licence....and a significant reduction in red tape” and for taxi networks “a great deal more adjustment will be required, but....the networks have the scale and the management capacity to change”.

The traditional hire car industry has also benefited from a number of changes under the reforms including the removal of hire car licences, operating area restrictions and booking waiting times. The hire car assistance scheme of up to \$10 million was also available to perpetual and fixed term (50 or 10 year) hire car licence holders.

What does detrimentally impacted mean?

The purpose of the *Point to Point Transport (Taxis and Hire Vehicles) Act 2016* (the Act) is to help ensure the sustainability of the taxi and hire vehicle industries. The reforms remove restrictive regulations and give service providers greater scope to modernise and innovate.

Overall demand for point to point transport services in NSW has increased over the last two years. Recent taxi licence releases in metropolitan Sydney suggest that there is growing demand for taxi licences. While some parts of the point to point transport industry are stable, or growing, some businesses or individuals involved in the taxi and hire vehicle industries may have been detrimentally affected by the reforms.

While a person may have been detrimentally affected if they have suffered a financial loss, the NSW Government is looking to provide additional assistance to those that are in the most financial difficulty as a result of the point to point transport reforms.

The actions of the applicant may also be a relevant factor in determining the extent to which a person was detrimentally affected.

How do I apply?

Please visit the Transport for NSW website at

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/point-to-point-industry-assistance> to review and download a copy of the Application Information Kit for an Individual or Corporation. These Kits include all of the information you need to know prior to making your application for an additional assistance payment.

Your application for an additional assistance payment must be made via the online portal or on the approved application form. The application form is available for download on the Transport for NSW website. Alternatively, you can contact the dedicated contact centre on **1300 639 074** to request an application form which will be posted to your nominated postal address.

Corporations, companies, co-operatives and networks will not be able to apply via the online portal and will need to apply by application form available for download on the Transport for NSW website or by phoning **1300 639 074**.

Applications must be completed and submitted before the due date with supporting documents and evidence. All documents and evidence provided with your application must be verified according to the guidelines approved by the Panel and published on the Transport for NSW website.

Applications that are submitted late will not be accepted. Applications that are incomplete or that include information and evidence that is not correctly certified may not be accepted.

A person must ensure that they provide accurate information in their application. If a person provides false or deliberately misleading information in their application they may be determined to be ineligible to receive an additional assistance payment and may be prosecuted.

If you submit an application form please retain a copy of your application and the certified supporting documents, as well as evidence that you posted the application (for example, registered post/express post receipts).

What documents do I need to submit with my application?

Detailed information about the application process and the required documentation is available in the Application Information Kit for an Individual or Corporation at <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/point-to-point-industry-assistance>.

Applicants applying as an individual or household will need to provide certified copies of the following:

- Tax assessment notices for the past three financial years (FY16/17, FY15/16, FY14/15) for themselves and their partner (if they have one).
- A council rates notice for the primary residence.
- Loan statement/s of any indebtedness related to their taxi licence or industry business.

Corporation, company, co-operative, network applicants will need to provide certified copies of:

- ASIC documents confirming the corporation, company, co-operative or network is a legal entity.
- Financial statements relating to the company operations over the past three financial years (FY16/17, FY15/16, FY14/15).

All documents and evidence provided with your application must be verified according to the guidelines approved by the Panel and published on the Transport for NSW website. Please note there are specific guidelines around the certification of electronic documents.

How do I certify documents for my application?

All supporting documents need to be certified as a true copy of the original either by an Australian Legal Practitioner (Solicitor or Barrister) or a Justice of the Peace (JP) (must show registration number).

The Justice of the Peace Handbook prescribes if the original is in electronic form a JP may use one of the following methods to certify the copy is a true and accurate copy of the original:

- The JP may wish to see the paper copy being printed directly from an official website that is under the control of the document's issuing authority, or
- The JP may wish to see the paper copy being printed directly from a computer that is under the control of the document's issuing authority, or
- The electronic original might need to be displayed in front of the JP on an official website under the control of the document's issuing authority, or
- The issuing authority has endorsed a printout of the original document with its official stamp in ink.

Is there anyone who can help me with my application?

Industry participants can contact Business Connect, a NSW Government program with dedicated Business Advisors located across NSW to support the taxi and hire car industries. The business advisors will be able to assist you during the application process. Please call 1300 134 359 or visit the website at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/businessconnect to obtain information about your nearest business advisor.

When will payments commence for additional assistance?

Payments will commence once an assessment and decision on all applications has been completed. It will take some time after applications close for all applications to be reviewed and final determinations for payments made. It is anticipated that payments will commence in December 2018.

What assistance is available now?

Industry participants can contact a Business Connect advisor. The advisors are independent of the NSW Government and are available to assist you with adapting to all the changes in the industry. Please call 1300 134 359 or visit their website at www.industry.nsw.gov.au/businessconnect.

Alternatively, applicants can approach the Financial Counsellors Association of NSW on 1300 914 408 or visit their website at <http://www.fcan.com.au/directory/>. Financial Counselling services are free, independent, confidential and multilingual assistance can be arranged.

Why are we not being compensated for any reduction in the value of our taxi licences?

The Scheme is not intended to provide compensation for any reduction in taxi licence values. It is designed to provide financial assistance to people like taxi and hire car licence holders who have been detrimentally impacted by the changes to the regulation of point to point transport.

Who makes the determination for a payment?

Payments of additional assistance will be determined by the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, based on the recommendations of the Panel. The total amount of additional assistance funds to be paid to applicants must not exceed \$142 million.

The Minister can determine that a person is not entitled to receive additional assistance funds if an applicant is found to have submitted a false or misleading application. The applicant may have their application refused and may also be prosecuted and fined for providing false or misleading information.

What is the role of the Panel?

The Panel was established to oversee the NSW Government's industry adjustment assistance package of up to \$250 million, designed to help the taxi and hire car industries adapt to the point to point transport reforms. The Panel includes representatives from Transport for NSW, NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, NSW Treasury and the NSW Taxi Council.

The Panel is required to determine processes for applications and make recommendations to the Minister for Transport and Infrastructure on criteria for payments of additional assistance funds.

What is the role of Transport for NSW?

Applications for additional assistance will be accepted by Transport for NSW, in its role as Secretariat for the Panel. Transport for NSW may also require an applicant to provide further information or evidence in support of their application.

Will my payment be taxed?

An Additional Assistance Payment may be assessed as taxable income. You are encouraged to seek independent legal or professional tax advice in relation to the additional assistance payment scheme and your individual circumstances.

The ATO has provided general advice in relation to the tax treatment of assistance payments which can be found at

<https://www.ato.gov.au/Business/Income-and-deductions-for-business/In-detail/Industry-assistance-payments-to-taxi-licence-holders/>

Will my payment impact on my pension?

An additional assistance payment has the potential to impact your pension. You are encouraged to seek independent legal or professional financial advice in relation to your individual circumstances.

I received a transitional assistance payment. Am I eligible for an additional assistance payment?

Anyone in the industry who considers they have been detrimentally impacted by the point to point transport reform can make an application for additional assistance during the application period.

Payments of additional assistance will be targeted at those persons who demonstrate the greatest financial hardship. All applications will be considered in accordance with the criteria set by the Panel.

Is this the end of assistance payments?

The Scheme is the final component of the broader industry adjustment assistance package of up to \$250 million.

Where do I get further information?

Detailed information about the application process and the required documentation is available in the Application Information Kit for an Individual or Corporation at

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/point-to-point-industry-assistance>.