



Media Release

1 June 2010

United Taxis puts up a United Front against Smoking

United Taxis has recently developed a smoke free policy whereby their premises and taxis are smoke free at all times - which was fittingly launched on World Smokefree Day (Monday 31 May).

Under the Smoke-Free Environments Act 1990, smoking is prohibited in taxi vehicles when operating. This policy takes the legislation a step further by making the prohibition mandatory at all times.

Director Bill Overton and manager Ross Overton said United Taxis implemented the policy because they were "sick" of their drivers not complying with the legislation, as well as receiving complaints from customers.

The company's policy now includes support for staff who wish to make a quit attempt as well as help with their nicotine addiction. United Taxis will allow staff to ring the Quitline during work hours and will pay the subsidised fee for Nicotine Replacement Therapy e.g. patches, gum and lozenges. The fee is currently \$3 per product for eight weeks worth of product.

"Having smokefree taxis at all times takes away the grey area and provides a safer and more comfortable ride for our clients," said Ross Overton.

"Research has shown that there are detrimental effects from the toxins which are absorbed into the upholstery of vehicles and leach out over time."

Public Health Service Health Promoter Dave Gibbs commended the move "What a positive step they have taken for all staff and customers. We support and congratulate United Taxis for this courageous move."

To enforce the policy, United Taxis management has set up a fine system, with all funds collected being donated to the Cancer Society.

"This isn't about us being draconian, it's about maintaining our obligations under the Smoke-Free Environments Act as well as providing a safer environment for our customers and staff," said Ross Overton.

Any member of the public is able to make a complaint if they see a taxi driver smoking in their taxi, and this can be anonymous. Please contact Public Health South to make a complaint or for more information call 03 4769 800.

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