Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme - Meeting with Minister's Office

This morning NCOSS and Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA) met with one of the NSW Minister for Transport's advisers to discuss the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme. All state governments offer taxi subsidies to residents who are unable to access public transport due to disability, but eligibility and entitlements vary from State to State. While the NSW scheme used to be considered one of the most generous, the assistance it provides now well falls well short of that available in many other states. Taxi fares in NSW have increased by more than 60% since 1999, yet the subsidy cap of $30 has remained the same: NCOSS called on the NSW Government to address this issue as a matter of priority in our 2012-13 Pre-Budget Submission (pp. 28-29).

Other aspects of the scheme were also discussed including the case for a higher subsidy rate for those participants permanently confined to a wheelchair. If introduced, this would reflect the approach adopted in Victoria, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and the ACT. The streamlining of the paper-based voucher system was also raised, as little progress appears to have been made since the trial of a smart card system in 2004-05.

NCOSS and SCIA were told that Transport for NSW is currently reviewing various components of the scheme. We hope that this process will lead to opportunities to work in close consultation with the community sector to improve access to transport for people with disability.