

# John Castrilli MLA



## Representing the people of Bunbury

As you all wake this morning, some suffering slightly from the overindulgence of yesterday, I would ideally like to share a good news story with you.

And there are many to tell, considering the astounding response to charities throughout the region over this festive period.

However, it would be remiss of me to not highlight a worrying issue which arose recently.

Last week I was informed by the WA Country Taxi Operators group that they may terminate their wheelchair taxi services by January 15.

They will do this not because they want to but because the State Government has failed to heed their continual calls for help over the years.

Ironically, the same concerns of Perth taxi drivers were addressed thanks to a new subsidy scheme which has made the service viable in the metro area.

However country taxi operators have not been afforded the same consideration.

I know for a fact that the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure Alannah MacTiernan is aware of the issues because I made sure of it during several parliamentary debates during the past two years.

I made another formal request to the Minister in April calling for an extension of the subsidy scheme into regional WA.

The State Government's city-centric approach to its policies is my biggest gripe as a country politician but when that approach causes suffering to the most vulnerable members of our community such as the elderly and disabled – this gripe turns into a serious grievance.

People living with disabilities have already suffered an immense loss of independence.

To now take away their transport is shameful.

The Minister has had countless warnings from country taxi operators around the State and myself yet she has let it get to this.

It is amazing that our taxi drivers have had to go to these lengths to try and have their voice heard.

I hope, for the sake of those in our community confined to wheelchairs, that this last plea is not ignored again.

If you feel passionately about this issue I urge you to write to the Minister to express your concerns.

I would also be keen to hear your views through my website at [www.johncastrilli.com.au](http://www.johncastrilli.com.au).

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