

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
Inquiry into the NSW Taxi Industry

To **Reg Cockburn**

From **Mr Ajaka**

- 1. Several submissions have suggested that taxi drivers often run the risk of breaching road and parking regulations when dropping off or picking up passengers. Do you have any particular concerns or observations about the occurrence of such breaches?**

Whilst ever there is still humanity and commonsense in any taxi driver there are road and traffic regulations that will be breached in the course of providing a taxi service to the general public. Not every pick up point has an available legal parking space or driveway and not every customer is able bodied. In a purely practical sense it is occasionally necessary to double park or stop in a bus stop in order to pick up an elderly or disabled person or simply because there is no available space to stop at all.

Otherwise how do we communicate to a customer on a footpath, or inside a home or business that:

- i). we are there (not allowed to sound the horn)
- ii). that we need them to go around the block or walk 500 metres to an available park.

It is not practical to expect that the service can be provided without breaches. There are not enough taxi zones on every street to provide available space to park. At the moment commonsense is the only guide.

The taxi service is a unique service that is provided to the whole spectrum of the general public and as such needs a unique solution . Taxis differ to bus/train/ferry transport in that these modes of public transport have designated non flexible pick up and drop off points. Taxis are expected to pick up and drop off passengers at requested points.

Some passengers have special needs to be addressed that prevents them catching buses – more ‘taxi accepted’ drop off points are essential –

- Most drivers constantly weigh up specific customer safety needs (risk management) whilst attempting to balance the risk of breaching road/parking regulations and providing safe customer service.

The recent introduction of allowing taxis to stop for one minute in designated No Stopping zones is a step in the right direction but I feel that this concept needs to be expanded. For example a bus can legally stop at a

designated bus stop on a Clearway to allow passengers on and off the bus why not allow taxis to provide the same service .The time involved is minimal.

2. **Your submission highlights several issues that have been experienced in Newcastle following the introduction of the inner city lockout and consistent closing times for licensed premises (p2). What has been the impact of these measures on the taxi industry.**

Taxi's, whilst recognized as an important part of the states public transport system are not vehicles of mass transport. Rather they provide a more personalized approach to public transport, that is, they offer the safety and convenience of virtual door to door service through personalized booking systems. Many late night weekend customers expect and demand this type of service.

It is reasonable to say that previously the service worked well on weekends when the licensed venues adopted staggered closing times allowing taxi's to respond to demand at a particular venue and then move onto the next area of demand.

The legislated inner city 'Lockout' has provided some success in addressing alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour, however this approach is one part of a complex problem (issues such as; generational culture/changed societal values and wide spread use of recreational drugs of choice are also major contributors to anti-social behaviour) that has in itself created the significant problem of mass exodus of patrons from venues at the same time creating a larger volume of demand than was previously encountered, between a two hour window during the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings.

The following changes have been noted as a direct consequence of the inner city lockout;

an immediate drop in revenue

a drop in service – unable to provide a timely service to customers as all patrons are requesting taxis at the same time to go home. Previously staggered over a 3 – 4 hour time frame.

3. **The Victorian Government has recently established the Taxi Industry Safety Taskforce to develop initiatives to improve driver safety. Do you think that such a taskforce would be of benefit in NSW?**

I believe such a task force could be beneficial only if careful consideration was given to the inclusion of specialist safety and security consultants, a wide cross section of industry representatives and the demographics and dynamics of differing regions of the state

Consideration could be given to issues such as;  
training for drivers on how to diffuse volatile situations  
and advanced driver training skills

**4. One of the main reforms resulting from the Victorian Taxi Industry Safety Taskforce is the introduction of mandatory pre-payment of fares between 10pm and 5am. Would such an initiative be of benefit in NSW?**

I believe that a trial could be instigated in the Newcastle Taxi District. The following points need to be considered;

**a.** Other forms of public transport utilise automated pre paid systems – however they are forms of mass transport with timetables, designated pick-up drop-off points and predetermined costs for particular destinations.

The system could be effective for taxi transport and no doubt beneficial to deterring the offence of ‘passenger Runners’ and in some cases other instances of anti-social behaviour such as assault and/or property damage.

**b.** The system should be introduced, initially for a trial period before being evaluated in terms of customer acceptance, industry benefits and procedural effectiveness.

Any decision on this point would need to be discussed in consultation with a wide representation of the taxi industry community.

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BS1030	Mens Short Sleeve 2 pocket shirt	24.60		
BB6030	Mens Long Sleeve 1 pocket shirt	26.30		
BB1030	Mens Short Sleeve 1 pocket shirt	24.60		
0355	Mens Permanent Press Trousers – Pleated	43.25		
0305	Mens Permanent Press Trousers – Plain Front	42.80		
1310000	Mens Cotton Cargo Trousers	38.40		
0749	Mens Permanent Press Shorts – Pleated	34.05		
0713	Mens Permanent Press Shorts – Plain Front	32.80		
1710000	Mens Cotton Cargo Shorts	29.10		
V23S	Knitted Pullover	51.15		
V23SL	Knitted Vest	46.05		
3CJ	Waist Length Jacket	55.00		
3LL	Longer Length Jacket	60.25		
BL6030	Ladies Long Sleeve Blouse	26.30		
BL1030	Ladies Short Sleeve Blouse	24.60		
LV3504	Ladies Knitted Vest	41.10		
LC3505	Ladies Zip Cardigan	66.35		
LC8008	Ladies 3 Button Cardigan	70.30		
CP200	Ladies Permanent Press Pleated Pant	45.45		
CP201	Ladies Permanent Press Flat Front Pant	45.45		
CP202	Ladies Permanent Press Bootcut Pant	45.45		
CS300	Ladies Permanent Press Skirt	43.90		
PM18	Ladies Microfibre short	55.95		
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