

ATTENTION Ms RHIANNON

Select Committee On The NSW Taxi Industry
Parliament House
Macquarie St Sydney NSW

Dear Lee

I am replying to your questions on notice dated soon after the recent hearings:

1. Do you consider that radio networks still cater to the security of taxi drivers with regard to the activation of alarms and the assistance being rendered?

ANSWER: Yes, but that is not to say that the monitoring and the response to alarm activation could not be done better when in the hands of dedicated security companies. I believe that the issue is worth exploring. Such periods as when the radio networks are overburdened with work lend to, I suspect the efficiency of dealing with alarm activation being compromised. Security companies these days have in addition to the advances in satellite based technology- that was not around at the time of the regulations being made for compulsive belonging to taxi radio networks- fleets of mobile units with trained personnel empowered ideally to deal with treats to the safety of taxi cab drivers. This is a useful back up to the function of the police force in these matters. In this regard under the present circumstances the radio networks have a more limited potential utility.

2. Have advances in technology negated the need for a regulatory requirement that taxi operators continue to subscribe to a radio network?

ANSWER:

Yes most certainly.

3. Do you have experience of back – to – base alarm systems and would such systems work more effectively than the current radio networks? If your answer is in the affirmative, can you give reasons?

ANSWER:

I have back to base monitoring on my house.

Yes I can say that such a system has the potential to, when suitably applied to the Sydney taxi cab industry, work more effectively than the current radio network based functionality. My reasons for this are largely centred around the dedication for the matters that security companies are set up to deal with as opposed to the prime function of taxi cab radio net works- that is to say responding to emergencies as opposed to farming out radio work as when and where the volume of that work fluctuates. The more overburdened the networks get with the volume of work the less likely it is that M13 situations get properly attended to. M13 is the code that the industry ascribes to emergency – driver attack.

4. Do you consider that the indirect funnelling of fees through the radio networks to the Taxi Industry Association and then on to the Taxi Council occurs? If so, please explain how this happens and the consequences?

ANSWER:

I have heard and read about it that often that it likely is the case.

The consequences?

If it is happening then that is defacto compulsory unionism which is contrary to Australian law- how then can an organization such as the Transport Workers Union be expected to deploy the necessary financial muscle to compete when representing bailee drivers in the NSW Industrial Relations Commission- finance that comes from voluntary unionism? The flow on from that is potentially disaster for bailee taxi cab drivers.

5. Would the taxi industry function successfully in terms of delivery for the commuters if there were no absentee taxi license investors?

ANSWER:

Absolutely it would function better for commuters. Absentee investors breed taxi licence management organizations. These are often the source of both substandard labour relations and vehicle maintenance.

Q 5 Cont'd

They are also a big reason for the 3pm and 3 am changeover time debacle, as I believe the pressure from the mandarins of the industry is constantly on the regulator to maintain this very convenient status quo.

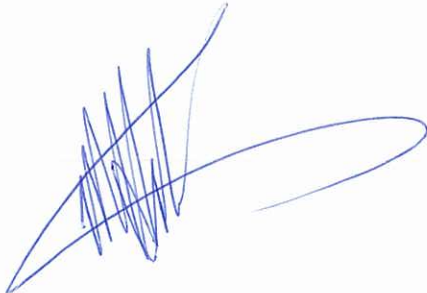
6. Do you advocate that the transferral of taxi operating licences only go to those taxi drivers on an hourly or weekly basis and if so why?

ANSWER:

I have no opinion.

In conclusion I hope that this reply to questions on notice is to the committee's satisfaction.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a series of vertical, slightly wavy lines on the left side, followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that curves upwards at the end.

Michael Hatrick