

**Submission  
No 27**

## **INQUIRY INTO NSW TAXI INDUSTRY**

**Name:** Mr Barry Frost

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The Hon John Ajaka

Just an idea regarding how taxi services in Sydney could be improved.

This idea came to me when I was returning to Sydney on business from Melbourne on a wet Friday night about 20 years ago. On that night I didn't care whether the cab driver had BO or smoked in the cab or didn't know the way to my place. (I could direct him on the destination). All I wanted was to go home, as quickly as possible.

Currently we have in Sydney a heavily regulated taxi service that often fails to deliver. The cost of taxi plates is extortionate and fares are set by the Government.

My suggestion is that a second tier less regulated taxi service be created. Initially second tier (ST) 500 licences would be issued. These cabs would be called flexicabs.

To qualify for a ST licence the applicant would need to have a current drivers licence and lodge \$10,000 as surety against bad behaviour. A ST driver behaving badly loses the \$10,000 and his licence. The applicant would not need to know anything about Sydney (as the passenger could direct the driver). The licence would not be transferable and would be personal to the driver and not worth anything other than for the driver. The cab would be a registered vehicle clearly marked as a flexicab. The vehicle could only be driven by a licenced flexicab driver. The cab would not be required to have a meter, the driver and passenger could agree on the fare before undertaking the journey. Alternatively the cab could have a meter which would need testing annually. The meter would not need to use the regulated fare structure however. I doubt the flexicab drivers would want access to the Cabcharge system.

Clearly the current registered cab fleet would end up being used primarily by people such as tourists unfamiliar with Sydney and those wanting a minimum regulated level of service. For the rest of us, flexicabs would be the way to go. I would imagine some of the refugees fresh out of detention centres could raise the minimum amount required to become a licenced flexicab driver. Students also.

Just by promoting this idea in the right places could make the taxi industry a little more amenable towards providing a better service than is obtainable currently. If not, just keep issuing second tier licences until the quality of service provided by the taxi industry improves.

Taxi services are just another service (like health and several others I would suggest) where Government listens only to narrow pressure group(s) rather than legislating for the general good of the whole population. My suggestion provides an alternative approach.

regards

Barry Frost