

**Submission
No 31**

INQUIRY INTO NSW TAXI INDUSTRY

Name: Mr Elias Haddad

Date received: 22/01/2010

Re: NSW Taxi Industry

I am an individual taxi owner driver and operator and been doing so in the last 35 years.

This is my voluntary feedback regarding the taxi industry as its going through reform due to some what I hear complaints that is affecting our taxi industry.

Let me assure you in all my driving years I have had a lot of compliments about my driving skills and ability. In the taxi industry to be able to drive lengthy hours behind the wheel it does not just grow on you but it takes a lot of patience and determination.

I could tell you a lot of stories regarding dealing with passengers at all levels but the end result is every journey must come to an end whether the passenger is an executive or a professional man or a street man a person that is drunk or a runner etc.

As a taxi driver and being on the road 24/7 we see and hear a lot but we are very limited to what we can do in other words if we see that someone needs help we are too afraid to help because of the consequences and also if we see something that is out of the ordinary we are most likely to keep an eye shut because we do not want to be dragged into lengthy questions as our hands are always tied behind our back.

As far as taxi standards are concerned, from the feed back I have been getting from all the interstaters and tourists, they are of the opinion we are the best in Australia clean cars knowledgeable skilled and friendly drivers and as far as servicing the people of Sydney everyone is satisfied with the service. Of course we are going to get the unsatisfied people we call them the M9s it means an intoxicated person that could very well vomit in your taxi which happened to one of my cars about 2 weeks ago and they can just get out of the cab and not worry about anything but being a silver service taxi which is a luxury and upmarket car we have to make sure that the car is thoroughly clean for service again and other passenger problems like the runners if they happen to commit such an offence we have a lot of technical paper work and expenses before and if we can recover any money. I can carry on all day about the M9s but this is a short brief of what we go through.

As far as covering radio jobs indications are that all work is covered on time. The taxi industry has become a very expensive industry to keep and maintain probably in line with all the businesses around the world. From a taxi owner point of view I like to see my investment in the industry is secure and in line with other businesses and investments this can happen only if consideration is taken when the Government personnel make a fair decision regarding the taxi industry rules and regulations not mentioning the old retired Australian citizens that rely on the income from hiring out their taxi plates and do not take hand outs from the Government to survive in their old age. I do agree that the population of Sydney is rising and therefore more businesses are needed to service such a population including the taxi industry and let's hope that any decisions that are made are fair for all parties.

A taxi driver currently working a minimum of 10 hours shifts these days is liable to have good and bad time. Unfortunately due rise is costs of living as well as the global economic impact these days we have more bad days then good days so a taxi driver having a bad day if he cannot control himself he can run into a lot of strife and also driving lengthy hours sometimes without realizing commits traffic offences that

jeopardize his driver's licence points system and therefore lose his licence for a lengthy period of time. I am personally heavily committed financially and such an offence could destroy me in other words if these matters are taken into consideration by our humble Government I am sure it will be appreciated from a taxi driver point of view.

Passengers in the taxi are of the opinion that they are always in the right. We find that we have to explain to them all the time about the rules and regulations of the taxi industry and sometimes for peace sake we ignore the situations. A taxi driver that lets the passengers eat or drink or smoke in the car the passenger expects to do it in every cab afterwards.

Going back to the subject of the latest talk of the taxi reform if a decision to issue taxi plates for sale or for lease or for disable use is not thoroughly performed it could have a catastrophe on the permanent taxi drivers and the taxi plate owners in other words on the whole industry and let me assure you that this industry did not get where it is now without the efforts of everyone. If there are any negotiations to be conducted I ask you to be fair to such a decision. Indications regarding complaints for lack of taxis are almost certain coming from the M9s in other words if you are driving by yourself at night and drunk people approach you you will then try not to pick them up because as I mentioned previously the consequences they could kick a door or a panel of the car and getaway with it or they could throw a beer bottle or something to break a window or a very popular offence to break the door mirrors which by the way are around \$450 to replace and who are we to get out and argue with them and jeopardise our safety don't forget most of us have families to go back to etc. etc.. Yes we can report such offences but in all the time I have reported such offences never have I been compensated for it.

Let me finish my comments by again saying that the taxi industry is a very expensive industry to run for the operators as well as the drivers and therefore when there are problems or incidents that need to be addressed we always weigh out our figures whether it is worthwhile doing or not.

Indeed there could be room for improvements in the taxi industry but it seems like every time changes are made it is never in the favour of the taxi operators or drivers why don't we work together on solving issues and problems and have the opinion of some professional taxi drivers as well as the Government and see if we can do the best by everyone taxi drivers taxi operators taxi owners taxi corps. and please involve the young and the old.

Faithfully,

Elias Haddad,
Taxi plate owner and operator 21.01.2010