

INQUIRY INTO NSW TAXI INDUSTRY

Organisation: Penrith Disabilities Resource Centre Inc
Name: Mr Murray Wilcockson
Position: President
Date received: 20/01/2010



**PENRITH
DISABILITIES
RESOURCE
CENTRE INC**

ABN: 52 974 232 441

114-116 Henry Street
Penrith NSW 2750
PO Box 185
Penrith NSW 2751
Phone: (02) 4732 2363
Fax: (02) 4722 8168
Email: pdrc@pdrc.org.au
Web: www.pdrc.org.au

18 January 2010

The Director
Select Committee on the NSW Tax Industry
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

The Chairperson
The Hon. John Ajaka MLC
NSW Parliament's Select Committee on the NSW Tax Industry

Dear John Ajaka MLC

My name is Murray Wilcockson and I am the President of Penrith Disabilities Resource Centre Inc. My contact details; as above or;
private contacts are:

address



In this submission I would like to convey my concerns and suggestions of those of my fellow management committee members, volunteers and clients, most of whom have varying degrees of disabilities.

(1) Taxi Subsidy Scheme Subsidy Review:

The Taxi Subsidy Scheme was introduced in 1981 with a subsidy of a maximum subsidy of \$25 dollars on a \$50 fare. This subsidy was increased in 1999 to a maximum subsidy of \$30 on a \$60 dollar fare. Since this last increase taxi fares and the volume of traffic has increased substantially which can increase the fare dramatically leaving the user considerably worse off.

Table 1

Year	Hiring Charge	Distance Rate	Waiting time
1982	80c	50c per Km	\$12.00 per Hr
1999	\$2.20	\$1.22 per Km	\$34.80 per Hr
2009	\$3.20	\$1.93 per Km Plus 20% between 10pm / 6am	\$50.00 per Hr

As you will observe from table 1, Taxi fares have increased by nearly 200% since the introduction of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme with only a minimum increase in 1999.

We suggest that the Select Committee recommends that the maximum subsidy should be increased immediately to \$50 maximum on a fare of \$100 dollars. This subsidy should be reviewed annually, linked to the CPI and or taxi fare increases. This increase is more realistic by today's standard.

(2) Problems and suggestions:

Many people with disabilities Intellectual, Physical, Totally Blind and Visually Impaired are unable or have difficulty in filling out the existing M40 or M50 Taxi Subsidy Scheme Dockets. Such people need a reliable assistant to complete their dockets; the other

alternative is to have an honest person to help them sign a number of blank dockets to carry with them. This does not comply with the rules set down; and relies on the honesty of the taxi driver to complete the form correctly.

A recommendation for solving this problem could be the introduction of a scheme that was trialled in approximately 2005. This trial was carried out using an individual identity card rather than a docket for each taxi journey. This proved most beneficial and popular especially for those people with difficulties in completing their dockets.

Should this suggestion be introduced it would eliminate any temptation for unscrupulous taxi drivers to falsify any details for their own advantage when filling in the passenger's docket.

(3) Taxi Ranks Problems and Suggestions:

People with disabilities have varying problems, such as locating and reading the signage, to gain a position in the taxi queue, and maintaining their position in same.

People using mobility aids have trouble holding their position in the queue. Blind and vision impaired people obviously have the same problems when inconsiderate and impatient people jostle for a taxi in unmarked taxi ranks.

A suggested recommendation is to erect clear signage and a guide rail in conjunction with ground surface indicators (GSI) would help keep the intending passengers in a orderly queue at major taxi ranks. If adopted this suggestion could be advantageous to the taxi industry.

(4) Wheelchair users concerns and suggestions:

Apart from the afore mentioned concerns in (1 & 2) the main problems are:

- Owing to the unavailability of enough accessible taxis, a wheelchair user, to be assured of a taxi, must book their taxi two or three days prior to their requirement.
- Should the need for a taxi be unpredictable or urgent the waiting time could be extensive.
- This indefinite wait, which could be up to two or three hours or longer, could be embarrassing or dangerous in certain circumstances.

We suggest that the Taxi Enquiry recommends incentives to make it more attractive to the taxi industry and encourage them to provide more accessible taxis this would eliminate lengthy waiting times.

I thank you for reading our submission and hope you and your committee give our suggestions your consideration.

Yours sincerely



Murray Wilcockson
President