

Submission
No 63

INQUIRY INTO NSW TAXI INDUSTRY

Name: Mr Graham Mooney
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Partially Confidential

Attention:

Director: Rachel Simpson.

Dear Ms Simpson,

As a matured aged professional Aboriginal male and lives in Glebe the newspaper article of this Taxi Inquiry caught my attention.

I just want to draw to your attention or the attention of this parliamentary Taxi Inquiry that Aboriginal professional people and Aboriginal community people have always found it hard to get a Taxi in Redfern, Inner City and most recently along Glebe Pt Rd.

For example Channel 7's current affairs programs has tackled this issue a number of times with the Aboriginal Actress, Lillian Crombie and as the Viewers watch the various other celebrities who get taxi's, Lillian is always left stranded as the "wall flower" as taxi drivers pass her by. I feel sorry for Lillian when this occurs to her so often because of her classical Aboriginal features. She has to catch public transport everywhere and had to choose where she lives to survive this embarrassment

After a Commonwealth Reconciliation event that occurred at Bangarra Dance Company on Walsh Bay with John Howard the then Prime Minister, the Australian Reconciliation Chairperson, Dr Evelyn Scott appeared in the newspaper the next morning was not able to get a taxi as (They) passed her by and she had to catch a plane to Canberra to be at a reception with Prime Minister that evening.

Bishop Tutu's niece is a regular visitor to Redfern and on a number of occasions has never been able to catch a taxi. She has called on the Aboriginal people of Redfern that this happened in Soweto in South Africa and that the people brought their own taxis to ferry black people around. She has stated strongly in Redfern that the South African people to buy 2 taxis for Aboriginal people in this city so as not to get stranded anymore.

In my case because of this stupidity of trying to catch taxi's I had to buy a car. Any visitors to my home at any time, including to a fro from the airport and Central Station I make sure that none of my family or visitors catch taxis. I go to the Opera House throughout the year. I drive my car into the Opera House car park just in case Aboriginal Elders attending functions don't get stranded anymore because of Taxis. I saw Auntie Bonita Mabo stand for 3 hours after an function and in the end we walked to the public bus stop to get where she wanted to go

I have made everyone aware not to be caught up with such stupidity of these taxi drivers and to be patient, take public transport or ring me whilst (They) are in Sydney night life and I go and pick them up so that Aboriginal people don't suffer the stress.

I've earned up to \$600 on one Saturday nite alone just to get people from here to there because of the taxi drivers and most of that was from complete strangers when I drove our kids into the city and on the way back stopping at traffic lights and young white people in groups hassling me to take them to somewhere because (they) have been standing for 2 hours. Some Americans gave me a \$100 tip driving them from Circular Quay after I dropped off a white mate that lives in Manly and the American's standing when I dropped him asked him if I would drive them to a theatre near Chinatown and they tipped me \$100 Us dollars.

I always refuse the money because I understand the circumstances (They) are placed in with Taxis in this city. I've always lived in the Inner City of Sydney for 35 years and I still can't believe that this is happening today.

When I lived on Kent Street and the hotel staff opposite would observe that Taxis would not stop or pick me up came up with an arrangement for me to go into the hotel and They would hail me a cab to be picked up in front of the Observatory Hotel in Kent Street.

The Taxi companies should have policy to employ Aboriginal Drivers to drive in these areas.

It's so embarrassing when they stop and you put your hand on the knob and (They) drive off and leave you stranded. Its happened far too many times for me or any other Aboriginal person to make comment. They just don't get our money anymore. So (They) loose out.

I've come to realise now how much money I could make personally on Saturday nite in Sydney because of the stupidity of Taxi Companies and their drivers. I'm not going to tell taxi companies this anymore.

I live in the Inner City and can't catch taxis. That's why?

I've seen Aboriginal women with there shopping, take the eggs out the carton after waiting for Taxis for over an hour whilst they continued to pass them and pelt the eggs all over their windscreens. The Taxi drivers call the Police and when Aboriginal women explain how would (They) like their wives to be out shopping and taxis pass by the Police have to then call a taxi. How dehumanising and demoralising is that

People like me are using Indigenious websites warning Our people not to catch taxis if they can help it at hotspots in every city in Australian and especially from Sydney domestic and International airports. Use the trains and public transports or send schedules for Us to pick them up. I travel on average 5 times a week to Sydney airports so that my family and many friends don't have to get into Sydney Taxi's to be demoralised.

Many Aboriginal people are now understanding its easier to drive to the airports car parks and catch the airport buses to and from the terminal at a lesser amount then catching a Sydney Taxi.

We have to suffer these terrible ordeals and learn not to complain anymore but for our own survival learn new techniques. I don't know what young Aboriginal people in Sydney do these days as I know most would walk to and from the city with no problems at all. Its much easier and much faster then complaining or the "In thing" said "Jump the train".

I just wanted to share this with you, Rachel. Be free to ring me on if you need any further information. Most Aboriginal organisations today have buses to ferry elders and people around but there has been many occasions and stories where Aboriginal people are left on the street with shopping and children because Taxi Drivers wont pick them up because (They) are Aboriginal.