

**Submission
No 12**

INQUIRY INTO NSW TAXI INDUSTRY

Name: Mr Barry Bell

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The Director,
Select Committee on the NSW Taxi Industry,
Legislative Council,
Parliament House,
Macquarie Street,
SYDNEY 2000

The Hon. John Ajaka MLC
Dear Sir,

This not so much as a submission but is a plea on behalf of fellow drivers and myself. Please get the Taxi industry back on the track of years gone by.

I have been a licensed Taxi driver for about 30 years, although working on a casual basis. I have seen many changes, mostly for the better, but one change really contributed to the excess of drivers joining the industry to then leave shortly after fully disillusioned. This high turnover has led to the public turning away from Taxi transport, as they can no longer rely on a service that meets their expectations.

When I first drove a Taxi there was a large degree of professionalism as, to own a Taxi plate, you had to be a driver. The owner in turn employed a driver who, in time, could qualify for a plate of his own. There were some people dropping out after getting a license, as they were unsuitable but in the main the drivers that remained were regarded as professional people who took pride in their skills. **In this way only two people were making a living out of the Taxi.**

The Government then saw fit to make money out of issuing plates by not only selling them to qualified drivers but to anyone who walked in off the street. The plates became a lucrative investment area as, opposed to buying a house and renting it out, with all the costs involved, buying a plate has no upkeep and just brings in revenue.

The new plate holders then created a whole new industry of Plate Managers who rented the plates, provided a car and then recruited drivers. **This then meant that per day four people was making money out of one Taxi with the driver last in line.**

The above has led to the income of the driver being surely eroded and only the desperate going into the trade and mostly not lasting very long. **There goes the professionalism.**

I am privileged as due to my experience, I work for the few owner/drivers left and only have to make money for the owner and myself. Even so my average income is \$9.70 per hour and would be less than \$5.00 if in a managed taxi. I have see a number of new drivers, working on a managed taxi, finishing a shift not only making nothing for himself but owing money out of his own pocket. That is why they drop out and the travelling public are left with drivers who are desperate to earn a living that they tend to extract as much as they can from the passengers leading to complaints and loss of customers.

I know we cannot go back to the old ballot system of issuing plates but if the investors could be taken out of the industry we could once more have a viable industry that aids the driver and in turn assure good service and therefore extra custom.

Yours faithfully,



Barry Bell
Authority AN1516