

**INQUIRY INTO OPERATION OF THE POINT TO POINT
TRANSPORT (TAXIS AND HIRE VEHICLES) ACT 2016**

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

To Whom It May Concern,

I have been in the Taxi Industry for 32 years, of which 28 years have been as an operator and cannot believe where the industry is positioned in 2020.

Point to point reforms have made individual taxi and rideshare providers aware of their safety obligations. The taxi industry had already maintained a high standard of safety prior to these reforms. Point to point reforms have failed to address driver supply.

Lack of control on supply of rideshare drivers has led to:

- a) Market saturation of drivers
- b) Increased road congestion
- c) Decreased income for drivers
- d) Longer hours worked for less income
- e) Driver fatigue increases
- f) Safety risk higher for both driver and customer
- g) Mental health issues increase i.e.; depression, anxiety, marriage breakdowns, suicides
- h) Driver retention rates decrease changing from rideshare back to taxis
- i) Lack of disposable income for drivers; How does that benefit the economy?

The NSW taxi council and driver associations have voiced these concerns for years even more now due to the new reforms and no effective changes have been made by the regulator. These concerns are evident in most point to point industry sectors Australia wide. The positive of the negative impacts of point to point regulations is that there is more than sufficient evidence for regulators to introduce holistic regulation. A win-win approach to regulation so point to point service providers can grow market share without drivers being exploited. Traditional taxi industry regulation had created better viability for operators and drivers. Establish an independent transport think tank to be involved in point to point policy decision making with support of taxi council and driver associations and independent drivers involvement so better outcomes achieved in government policy. More collaboration so that new ideas are implemented quicker and more effective minimal regulation is implemented allowing industry to self-regulate faster in the digital age and create a win-win approach for all taxi and rideshare service drivers.

The implementation of the taxi industry assistance package was very disappointing a long process for many heavily impacted license holders only to be told you are not entitled to additional assistance. Where is the transparency of the money paid out? Legislation change has caused an 80% reduction in license values a 50-60% drop in lease income and 20 to 50% drop in turnover and getting worse. The moral and ethical action government should take is buy back licenses at a fair price and lease back to industry as past governments did when the hire car industry was deregulated.

A new flexible licensing system to be introduced to include rideshare and taxi service providers as we move into the digital age. Examples are;

- a) user pay e.g.; time of day lease rate day/night
- b) hours worked license fee
- c) flat rate annual or casual fixed price options
- d) any other fee methods to address individual driver workloads variations more choice for drivers as to which fee is better suited to their needs.

Introduce an equivalent minimum fare charge for both taxis and rideshare services effectively policed so to hold companies in breach with swift fines and loss of operating license. The big rideshare companies have billions of dollars and are heavily subsidized mum and dad taxi and ride share service providers don't have billions they are not subsidized they must turnover a profit. Having a viable minimum price enforced will help to prevent artificial manipulation of the market by billion dollar backed rideshare providers using the selling point that they are cheaper?

In the existing taxi and rideshare market these cheaper prices are subsidized by the drivers due to exploitive driver pay conditions. An example of a holistic rideshare service provider is the government funded rideshare; trains buses, ferries if you increase supply of services, driver's incomes are not impacted. How ironic, yet in the taxi and rideshare industry that is not government funded as supply increases driver's income have decreased substantially. Point to point reforms have existed for a few years why have these issues of driver income not yet been finalized. These issues require urgent action and when implemented the rideshare market will grow to a sustainable viable industry for taxi and rideshare drivers stop the exploitation NOW.

More adaptive gig worker protection laws need to be implemented urgently for the digital age.