

**Submission
No 59**

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

Name: Mr Louis Ilias Louridas

Date Received: 8 May 2020

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**The Director
Portfolio Committee No.6
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000**

Dear Sir/Madam,

In 1964 I decided to pursue a career as a professional taxi driver in the taxi industry. There were certain requirements that needed to be fulfilled; you had to have your New South Wales driver's license for at least two years, be able to read and write English, go through a location test and sit through lectures with the police, after which you would be issued your tentative license for the period of three months. After the three months, you would be issued your taxi driver license and then be able to purchase a taxi plate. For those who had worked more than ten years in the industry, they were given a taxi plate through seniority as a reward for their long service instead of leave and superannuation.

In the 1980s the NSW government deregulated the taxi ownership. Many investors, who previously had no involvement in the taxi industry, jumped in for a 'quick buck', including the NSW government, as the taxi plates were sold in a public auction. The release of taxi plates continued. They ignored the advice provided by IPART stating that Sydney had an over supply of taxi plates but took the advice of Cabcharge. The NSW government was to release more and kept on asking each year for more so as to make Cabcharge stronger. All the new releases were going to Cabcharge and to the taxi groups and not one to an individual. As you can see I have attached the Governments's advertisements for the auction of taxi licences.

On 17th December 2015, the Minister of Transport with the stroke of a pen legalised private cars to do taxi work. Now there are 100,000 so called ride-sharing vehicles doing taxi work and all they need to have is a NSW driver's license and any car will DO. Leading up to the introduction of the ride-sharing system, the government had thumbed their noses at the regulations I had followed for fifty years, therefore jeopardising the safety of the public. I certainly would not want my granddaughter in a ride-sharing vehicle. As I neared retirement, I was feeling comfortable that my years of service to the industry and to the public of NSW would be rewarded by having a safe and secure source of income. My taxi plate value at that time was \$450,000 and my monthly income was \$2,200 plus GST. The story is very different today as my monthly income from the lease is now ZERO and the value of my taxi plate is not much more than ZERO dollars.

On the 9th April 2019 I received a hardship payment from the NSW government for loss of income. We were relieved to receive the payment but then my pension and my wife's pension was cut immediately for a period of twelve months. I then had to pay \$38,000 in tax on that hardship payment received. This left us with very little income to live on and made life very difficult and stressful for both of us. It was a financial CATASTROPHE.

The NSW government must come clean and buy back my plate and the plates of others in the same category, specifically from the owners that have no more than three plates. It must be clear to you that we are disappointed in the government; I appreciate this opportunity to explain to you how my many years of service that I have provided to the state of NSW have been ignored, thus crippling myself and my wife in our retirement.

Thank you for considering the buyback of the taxi licenses.