

From: [REDACTED]
To: [taxiinquiry](#)
Subject: Taxi Submission: Hillington Lodge P/L
Date: Tuesday, 18 June 2019 11:01:49 AM

TO THE HONOURABLE MEMBER ROD BARTON VICTORIAN PARLIAMENT RE: TAXI SUBMISSION.

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Dear Mr Barton,

Finally an opportunity to tell our story about the changes in the industry since 2017. I know there are people much worse off than us but this is our little story on how we were broken in monetary terms and in our mental state.

We owned four licences at the time of the great taxi robbery! Two M50's, one Camry taxi and one hire car licence. We work in Sale Victoria. Have been here for 30 years, previously owning taxis in Traralgon.

When the government allowed open entry two of the current owners here took up the opportunity to apply for four more licences. There is no transient population here so there was no extra work for four more taxis. All it achieved was the dispersal of monies between 16 taxis instead of 12.

There is really only enough work here for one wheelchair bus, but we had the second one to back up, so as not to leave reliant passengers in the lurch. We found when the extra licenses came into being we had to get rid of one of the M50's, we simply couldn't afford to keep it. Luckily one of the other owners picked it up but is now realising that it wasn't one of his wisest business decisions. And can only make money if he's in that vehicle himself for most of the time. We also have the predicament that later this year our wonderful full time driver who has driven our M50 all this time is going to retire. We are never going to get another driver like him who cares about his customers. We have to replace the M50 soon as it is costing more for the oil we're putting in it than the fuel. We are not prepared to do that even though we care about our customers, but sorry we can't keep cars on just to appease them. Even with the subsidy it is just too much for another HP with the reduction in our income. So it's more than likely our town is going to be minus a wheelchair taxi. As we are the only owners to have the M50's it is only us that can apply for a subsidy, and I would if it was to be an asset. The government will have to work out these problems as they caused these situations themselves.

The other question that I really wish the government had listened too when talking about the changes in the taxi industry, is the fact that taxis in the country should never have been tied up in this fiasco. What did we do? We have only ever given our customers the best service because why? We rely on return service. Metro drivers don't. They might never see the same person twice! By deregulating taxis in the country caused so many problems it's getting to the stage that we will all just walk away. But we're hanging in there even though our income has dropped by a quarter. My husband and I were going to start to retire this year, but because we have lost so much money to add to our superannuation plan we just have to keep going. My husband is not young enough now to make up the \$500,000 that we lost from the value of our licences. So we keep going until one of us drops I guess. The government has also doubled paper work with the \$1 levy plus ongoing admin work. I work around 15 hours a week just doing the government's job. We are a collection agency. And do they make it easy? Oh no they don't!

My husband Gary is 66 now and well past getting into a taxi at 5.30 in the mornings. But has to work more shifts as we find it hard to find drivers because once again, the loss of income has affected them too. And whilst I'm there, when is this foolish idea about 55% and 45% going to be squashed. We pay all the fuel and dents, repairs. So how the hell can we make any sort of profit?

It's all very well for the government to make all these decisions but have no idea of the flow on problems it creates. Right from the little old lady who relies on taxis through to the owner and drivers just trying to make an honest day's pay for an honest day's work! Those of us that paid large prices for our cabs care about customers, those that have a licence to rent don't give a damn they can always give it back when they get sick of it . In the mean time they have ruined what we had; an excellent business in a nice country town, where everyone went home with an equal pay for the day. Now we have sinister drivers doing the wrong thing by our customers and goodness knows what else. At least if the control has been taken from us to provide a decent taxi service then at least give us the monies we are owed from the great taxi robbery!!! We estimate that to be in our case \$500,000. Each licence worth \$200,000 in Sale. I hope with these submissions it goes some way to help us at the end.

Signed,
Jennifer Trewin (alias WOTO: worn out taxi owner)
Secretary
Hillington Lodge P/L

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