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Peter Manikas
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To:-
The Economy and Infrastructure Committee

SUBMISSION

PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO COMMERCIAL PASSENGER VEHICLE REFORMS IN VICTORIA

Introduction:-

It has taken me over a month and a great deal of effort mentally and physically to write this submission as I feel sick to the stomach and depressed at every word I write knowing that the committee is probably made up of the very politicians that voted for the legislation that has destroy my life (and others) for what was purely a Government Financial Decision to simply avoid their responsibility and moral obligation for any payment of a fair and just compensation for the acquisition/revoking of a person's assets / property / taxi licenses. I find it hard to find the words to express to the committee my anger and what the reforms have done to my life and to my family. You cannot realise how badly my life (and others) has been effected. It has taken my life away from me.

Firstly, Back ground and Facts:-

My name is Peter Manikas, my taxi ID is [REDACTED], I am 70 years of age and I have been in the taxi industry as an owner driver since 1976 upon purchasing my taxi license in accordance with Government rule and regulations. I paid in 1976 (43 years ago) the then market value for my taxi license that was the equivalent price of an average house.

At the time of the taxi Industry Reforms the market value of a taxi license was an average \$500.000 which was NOT even the price of an average house. Taxi licenses over the years although increasing in value by way of some inflation did not even keep up with inflation to reflect our true value of our initial investment.

We did not profit from the purchase and or sale of our taxi licenses if you take inflation into account.

It was the requirement by Government for one to enter the taxi industry and buy ourselves a job at great expense by purchasing a taxi license on the open market or through Government when licenses were made available from time to time thereby having to get in a great deal of debt to enter the taxi industry.

I like others purchased my taxi license in good faith as required by Government knowing that it was a perpetual license and my property which I and others worked so hard to pay off our debts by working 60 to 80 hours per week so to have an income and or super upon retirement.

I did know however, as I was told at the time upon purchasing my taxi license that there are rule that apply that a person can be forced by government to sell their taxi license and forced out of the industry or possibly

have his taxi license revoked under extreme circumstance without compensation given, if and operator committed a serious criminal act or crime and could not show just course why his taxi license should not be sold or revoked. To my knowledge this has never happened to anyone.

The facts:-

This rule or legislation was directed to an individual only that committed a serious criminal act and to my understanding that was the only intent of the legislations when it was written and introduced. There was no notion or thorough at the time of the writing of the legislation that it was introduced or intended to be used against the whole taxi industry for the purpose of revoking the whole of the taxi industries taxi licenses in total without compensation at any point in time in the future. If that was the case no one would have put their life's work and their life savings or committing themselves financially to a great deal of debt in building up a family business with such a risk with a chance of losing everything.

Having said the above, to my knowledge and the reading of that part of the legislation that was used to revoke all taxi licenses, refers only to revoking a license, in reference to other public transportation services **BUT** it does not specifically specify or refers to a taxi license as taxis are not part of the public transport system, thereby the act of revoking taxi licenses in my view was illegal, unjust and is contrary to the legislation. Please check this.

Taxi licenses is property:-

A taxi license is property as it is recognized as property by the high court, taxation department, banks and was even traded on the stock exchange as property. The whole issue is, the deliberate refusal, arrogance and blatant stubbornness of Daniel Andrews and Jacinta Allan to acknowledge and recognize that a taxi license is property and is a blatant deliberate attempt to avoid payment of compensation or buy back which has caused all the heartache pain and suffering and deaths from stress and depression in the taxi industry. They both have no conscience.

Theft by legislation :-

I and others strongly believe without prejudice, that the Premier Daniel Andrews and the Transport Minister Jacinta Allan deliberately distorted and twisted the true meaning and intent of this part of the legislation to suit their needs and agenda and lied to parliament in order to revoke all of the taxi industries licenses in total without compensation. They again lied in regards that a taxi license was not property contrary to the high court. **We have done nothing wrong for our taxi licenses and property to be taken away from us without the offer of full market value compensation and or buy back.**

It is beyond belief that any Government in today's democratic society can do such an act to deliberately take away without conscience a person's property and destroy and devastate my life and thousands of other lives made up of small family businesses, our incomes, property and our life's savings, an industry which is made up mainly of hard working immigrant that came to this great country for a better life and that worked so hard their whole lives, and our reward, **theft of our assets by government legislation just for Government** to avoid paying any compensation. WHY??

The effects, has destroyed my life:-

The committee cannot understand the devastating effect, pain and suffering a person and their families are going through unless you put yourselves in our position. Even then, you would still not understand unless it actually happened to you if a Government comes along and takes away your life's work, your savings, income, super, assets and your **parliamentary retirement pension** package and leaves you with little or nothing and financially devastated **how would you feel ??? would you not feel devastated, gutted and angry** and for no other reason other than for Government to avoid paying compensation, it's just criminal and morally wrong.

Governments has paid out compensation for the acquisition of properties, including in the past, scallop boat and tobacco licenses buy backs, why are we being discriminated against ??? We worked hard all our lives to pay for our assets just for them to be taken away from us. We have done nothing wrong !!!

Now, it's hypocritical of the Premier Daniel Andrews in refusing the taxi industry compensation or buy back of taxi licenses and or our property, and further destroying the values of our properties, then turns around, and is going to use many hundreds of millions of dollars of public money to pay and give compensate to thousands of private property owners, investors and corporate owners who have purchased apartments with flammable cladding to pay for the removal of that cladding because the owners have no money to pay for the removal themselves and so to also save their property values !!!!!

What about the taxi industry compensation and property values??????????????

The loss or the theft by Government of my life savings/ investment, in what was to be my retirement nest egg and that's what it was, that I worked so hard to pay off which was the equivalent cost of an average house in the form of my taxi license has caused me emotional anger, stress and anxiety every time I see or hear Daniel Andrews or Jacinta Allan in the media which has destroyed my health physically and mentally and one cannot get it out of one's system until justice is done.

I now suffer from fits of anger, stress, depression, anxiety and the feeling of helplessness at the age of 70 where I have not enough savings to retire on and have now been given a life sentence to work the rest of my life until I die without the opportunity of being able to enjoy a life of retirement with my family like everyone else. My depression has destroyed my health and the family pressures has destroyed my marriage and my family life. I see no future for me, I cannot start all over again at 70 years of age, I cannot go on much longer, I still have to work 60 hours a week, and struggling to earn a living as my income has well under halved with the now flooding of the market place with approximately 60,000 passenger vehicles (up from 5000 taxis). The taxi industry has been destroyed by Jacinta Allan as it is now no longer viable, is depressing and one struggle to work and earn a living each day.

The Fairness Fund and Transition Payments :-

I did apply for the fairness fund but was rejected where others that I know in the same position as myself received various amounts of money!!!! There was no Fairness.

I did receive however a transition payment, but this payment should not be calculated or included as part of any compensation for one's taxi license as the committee knows, nothing was given for my taxi license, it was just taken from me. I consider the transition payment was a payment to transition one's life from going from a landlord to a tenant, for losing my business, going from earning a reasonable living to struggling to earn a living, for destroying my financial wellbeing, my health my marriage and my family life, for not being able to afford to retire, for the stress, pressure, anxiety and depression, No amount of transition payment is worth the above pain and suffering.

In closing, my future (and others) is in the committee's hands and their can only be one outcome for true justice to prevail in giving us a fair and just buy back of the market value prior to Uber.

Thank you

Peter Manikas