

To Whom This May Concern,

My name is Trevor Collins. I am currently 71 years of age. I obtained my Taxi Certificate in 1969 when I was 21 years of age. I worked part-time for a short time and then drove full-time until 1977 when I purchased my first taxi. I then drove my own taxi full-time. I purchased my second taxi in 1980 and my third in 1982.

I have never in my 50 years in the industry had any reason to believe that a taxi licence was not as secure as real estate. During the 70's and beyond, the government of the day allowed banks to hold a taxi licence as collateral against their loan. During the 2000's the government of the day required the Bendigo Stock Exchange to take charge of licence transactions to ensure all dealings were transparent. To me the government has always sanctioned the market value of a Taxi Licence. They have always taken control of licence transactions as well as being in total control of the everyday activities of the industry. They have allowed the market to create its value.

During the 70's I married and had four children. For all my working life I have forgone any holiday pay, sick pay, long service leave, or penalty rates. I have worked 70 to 80 hours per week and was on call 24/7. My wife, my family and I have forgone many activities together in the belief we were providing for a better life in the future.

In the late 80's I sold my taxis to finance my mechanical workshop, primarily to maintain taxis and then into the 90's when I leased up to 40 licences. For the next 20 plus years I was directing at any one time, in excess of 100 drivers as well as employing 2 full time mechanics, 1 full time manager and two other part-time staff. I have worked the business diligently, saving our money, paying our taxes and reinvesting back into the taxi business in the belief that we were investing in our future. I purchased 4 taxi licences between 2004 and 2014.

In my latter years I have been active in participation with the Victorian Taxi Association and other govt regulatory bodies. In 2008 I was acknowledged as achiever of the year by my peers.

Since Uber arrived and started operating illegally, I have had to dismiss one mechanic, our manager, and two part-time workers. I have remained at work, reduced to 18 cars, none of them being replaced, and only working at a quarter of their original capacity. The cars are much older, and we have no money for replacement. I am also aware of many operators in taxis and in Uber who are in financial difficulty as they are not able to pay for their cars.

My plans were to retire on what I thought would have been a good retirement income, void of any pension assistance, being able to help my family, and being able to partake in community activities. I received \$250,000.00 (taxable) from the government for licences that I physically paid (after tax) \$1,400,000.00. I feel my life has been totally thrown away. I have always been a high achiever. However, since I have lost my assets, I am no longer able to socialise. I have felt depression. I have sought help. I attended a psychologist. I informed her what was causing my anxiety. She felt that I had merely made a bad investment judgement. This assessment only dramatically increased my anxiety.

At the time of applying to the Fairness Fund, I read the requirements which indicated to apply I needed to be under financial hardship. At the time I was not going to be thrown out of my house, so I was not under immediate hardship, and when I was required to submit all my financials, I felt stressed. I therefore withdrew my application.

I hear regularly in the media from politicians on both sides of the spectrum calling for the community to work hard and achieve, and we will look after you. That is great except if you are in

the taxi industry. The last time any group of people were treated with so much contempt was 80 years ago in Europe. We have been sacrificed for the masses. I believe I have been robbed to the tune of \$2,000,000.00

If the government has decided to support an organisation who they had deemed illegal and deregulate the industry in their favour, then every licence owner must be paid out in full. The compensation that has been paid to me was a little over two years remuneration.

Regards,

Trevor Collins