

From :
Bill Ioannou

18th June 2019

To :
The Secretary,
Legislative Council, Economy and Infrastructure Committee,
Parliament House, Spring Street,
East Melbourne. VIC. 3002

Inquiry into the Commercial Passenger Vehicle Industry Act 2017

Please accept this submission to the Parliamentary taxi inquiry. My story is as follows.

At the age of nine years old in 1980 I was riding my bicycle on the street that I was living in. Along came a car and hit me. The car drove off and did not render any assistance.

I was unconscious, did not remember anything and spent two weeks in hospital. The damage I had incurred was a cut and fractured skull. There is a dent on the top of my skull from that impact.

The blood level in my head was compressed and it needed somewhere to go. It ended up discharging out of my right ear. As a consequence there was damage to the right ear and I became 30% deaf in that ear.

Later on after high school, I did a few varying short courses which I really did not get anywhere with. I then decided to become a trainee welder.

Whilst doing my training at RMIT I was constantly looking for work to complete my apprenticeship. No factories and companies were willing to employ me even though I had acquired four welding tickets from RMIT.

This happened in the early 1990s and it was a hard to find a job then. Australia was going through a recession.

Being unemployed, I then decided to become a taxi driver to earn a living. It was challenging at the start but soon I started liking it. I liked meeting different people and taking them to their destinations. What I liked most was the thinking required for each job because each job is different.

After 3 1/2 years working for a taxi depot, I decided to buy my own taxi license and become an owner driver.

So in November 1996 I bought my first taxi license at \$215,000 and a brand-new taxi of around \$40,000. I decided to use the compensation money that I had received from the bike accident to buy the taxi license and car, but that was not enough. I had to get a loan of \$140,000.

I strived very hard to pay the loan off. Six and a half years later, I had to purchase another new taxi. The age limit for taxis was 6 1/2 years. For that I took another loan of around \$40,000 .

In May 2006 I decided to expand my business by purchasing a second taxi license for \$380,000. The loan for that license was \$260,000. Years later I spent approximately \$50,000 buying a new taxi.

Now we come to 9th October 2017, the day the Daniel Andrews Labour government decided that taxi licenses were to have no value and would be replaced by taxi permits costing \$52.80 each.

On that day, October 9, 2017 I lost all my assets, my income, my future that I had worked very hard for over 27 years.

In my case it's extremely tough because Daniel Andrews Labour government stole my compensation money that I was rewarded after my bike accident aged nine years old. It feels so unfair to me.

My health has deteriorated both mentally and physically. I continue to drive taxis even though taxi driving has become very frustrating and it's hard to make money. Therefore I work longer hours just to feed myself and pay the bills. Nothing more.

I realise now that I will be driving taxis until I'm at least 70 years old before I receive the pension. If there is a pension. By then I would have driven taxis for more than 50 years.

Instead of being a self-funded retiree and not a burden on the economy, I'm afraid I will be a burden to the economy.

Such is life.

Kind regards
Bill Ioannou