

Our Story - John & Prosmerfina de Bruyn

My wife and I started in the taxi industry in 1977 when I became a part time driver with Astoria Taxis. I drove with them until 1987 when I became full time. In 1988 we purchased our first taxi licence which was in the metropolitan zone and we affiliated with Black Cabs (Now known as 13cabs) After 7 years of driving full time and providing work for 8 drivers we leased the licence to Eastmoor Taxis and I took up a role in the middle management of Black Cabs. As a Driver Liaison Officer I was responsible for the recruitment, training and conduct of some 4,800 drivers at any one time. I left this role in 2002, sold the licence and we purchased an Outer Suburban Licence with Dandenong Taxis. I again drove full time and we provided employment for drivers till 2005. We then leased the licence to our then full time day driver and I took up employment in the fitness industry and later the bus industry. I remained involved in taxis as a Director of Dandenong Taxis for 4 years and drove part time both with Dandenong Taxis and Pakenham Taxis.

We purchased our Dandenong licence for \$300,000 and always intended to sell at the market value when we reached 60 years of age. It was intended to be our "superannuation" as has been done by so many others before us.

When the Fels Taxi Inquiry commenced licence sales slowed to a trickle and then stopped. This was just as we each reached the age of 60 and wanted to sell. The licence for which we worked so hard and which had provided employment for and service to so many people become worthless.

Taxi licence prices had always been set by market forces. The state government of the day had for decades controlled and regulated this market. They always controlled the number of licences available and their spread over the state, overlooked their sale and were always aware of their cost. The only way anybody could become licence owners was to pay the market price. When it suited the government they even sold and leased out licences. Government actions since the Fels report may have been legal but the were certainly unethical.

We are not wealthy. We were not speculators trading in taxi licences. We were not in and out of the taxi market for a quick dollar. We are ordinary people who wanted to work in the local taxi industry and we were dedicated to Dandenong Taxis which served the taxi needs of the local community.

As a result of not being able to sell our one licence our retirement was delayed by 4 years. I have been on anti depression medication for the past 7 years.