

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 18 June 2019 2:41 AM
To: taxiinquiry
Subject: Taxi Enquiry

I am Ralph Grapentin of [REDACTED] and wish to provide comprehensive submission to taxi enquiry.

I am ex Commonwealth Public Servant having primarily worked as Payroll Assessor during 39 years of service.

I was having health issues in my last 5 years of Commonwealth Public Service with Department of Defence and subsequently was being medically case managed by them. I was diagnosed by independent psychiatrist that I was suffering from Major Chronic Depressive Disorder and that I had mild Asperger Traits. A series of unfortunate events there led to me being forced to take redundancy in November 2012. I was working part time in payroll processing due to my illness and was bullied by staff on at least four different scenarios which led to my forced separation from Defence. A inexperienced supervisor took over my area and she was the one that started the bad treatment to me. There was no action whatsoever taken over the treatment to me.!

After leaving Defence, my condition stabilised mainly from being relieved from the bullying and I realised that I regret leaving such a secure job. Obviously being relieved from the bullying made me realise that. I made extensive efforts to get job back, through Defence Ministers etc but they all said I knew what I was doing when accepting redundancy. But from being bullied at work and subsequently the pressures put on me, I obviously didn't know what I was doing, and that I didn't realise that there nil job prospects based on my medical conditions. Even the Public Sector union said I should never have had received redundancy given my medical conditions. And Comcare in their literature stated a medically case managed person has limited job prospects given their medical conditions and should be counselled before taking any redundancy!

With nil job prospects, I decided to do taxi 9 day training course to be a taxi driver. I commenced driving in December 2013 and found that drivers did 12 hour shifts. So there wasn't much of a life being a taxi driver and having to work 12 hour shifts. Compared to being a public servant of daily 7.5 hour shifts and paid at higher rate. I am pleading with any organisation to PLEASE GIVE ME A JOB.

Since being a taxi driver, I find it extraordinary at the way taxi drivers are being treated in the industry.

My comments below:

How can a Government create a 'Bailment Agreement' which results in taxi drivers being paid well below minimum rates ! At start of being taxi driver, if I was lucky enough to take \$300 for 12 hours, the bailment agreement would give me 50% which is $\$150 / 12 = \12.50 per hour ! And now that there are too many taxis, a bailment would give me less than \$10 per hour ! The bailment agreement is ancient and should be abolished ! In fact, IT IS ILLEGAL !

Since UBER has been allowed to operate illegally and then subsequently legally by Fiona Patten, income from taxi driving has plummeted and now is in a very DESPERATE STATE !! The government says rideshare and taxis are great for passengers, but what about the drivers ! There are far too many rideshare and taxi drivers !

In last few months, airport jobs have dried up. If a taxi driver is not at airport by 9.30pm, after waiting for hours, he will not get a airport job ! And there is no work in the suburbs ! And in CBD, you CANNOT get

into ANY ranks. And council compliance officers and police have been seen hiding and taking photos of taxis illegal parking ! So the result is, there is no hope of taxi drivers making a decent income !

The taxi networks are treating the drivers badly ! 13 cabs treating their drivers like employees ! Not allowing drivers to see destination before accept any job ! 30 min network access penalty if for any reason driver wants to recall any job for any reason. MUST go to a job if it's up to 10 klms away. Aren't drivers contractors so they can choose jobs ??

13 cabs accept any car, whatever age then August 2018 suddenly decide no more cars of over 8 years old ! But still allow old cars over 8 years old BUT charge them \$150 per month ! So I had to sell my immaculate 2010 Ford Wagon for a give away price !

When I was doing rideshare, I found passengers were giving inappropriate ratings ! It seems they rate on mood, not on quality of trip ! I got a number of one star ratings with NO FEEDBACK ! So the rating system is flawed ! I found rideshare companies totally control their drivers apart from choice of hours they want to work. So effectively rideshare drivers are not contractors but employees. I was shocked at Ombudsman finding of investigations !

Governments all around Australia AND Australian Taxation Office are illegally classifying taxi drivers and rideshare drivers as independent contractors and/or running a business !!!!! WHAT business or contractor in Australia accepts well below minimum rates ? None whatsoever ! And drivers do not set their own rates, or run their so called business THEIR way ! The industry is Government REGULATED ! It is my opinion that Governments all around Australia are absolving their responsibilities to running the industry themselves. They have gone for cheap labour primarily and indirectly exploiting migrants from overseas. It is DISCRIMINATION AND RACIST and WAGE THEFT ! So they don't have to pay the \$millions to correctly pay drivers, proper minimum wages, leave and SUPERANNUATION !!! It is time Governments paid taxi and rideshare drivers PROPER ENTITLEMENTS !!!!!

There must be a limit on numbers of taxis and hire cars !! Melbourne council must provide safe pick up and drop off for riders as it is their responsibility. Enforcement officers are fining drivers, what for if no place for riders. Rideshare per klm rates must be regulated as the rates are too cheap and drivers complaining as such ! Rideshare companies are deliberately charging cheap rates in an attempt to wipe out the taxi industry which is effectively Predatory Pricing. Even more so they are accepting \$billions in losses ! I have submitted this fact to ACCC with no subsequent action ! Why ? Government interference !

Passenger levy must be charged as a annual amount payable via a annual licence fee perhaps. The knowledge test for drivers must be introduced as new drivers have language difficulties and often don't know establishments etc.

As a ex public servant when enjoying decent income and working normal hours, I CANNOT make any decent income from taxi driving OR driving rideshare which I did for about 6 months then gave up ! I am so stressed working the ridiculous hours, that I will soon suffer medically, with NO compensation, leave etc available ! I have even become suicidal and had the police knocking on my door TWICE ! PLEASE, can someone give me a job where I'll enjoy a decent income, working normal hours and receiving leave and superannuation !! I am desperate !

In summing up, the taxi industry is not for me, working the ridiculous hours 7 days a week. And Governments must stop the wage theft, actually employ drivers and pay proper entitlements. Even if it means substantially reducing the number of taxi drivers, rideshare drivers !

Ralph Grapentin


