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**From:** George Chayeb [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, 16 June 2019 7:52 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** taxiinquiry  
**Subject:** SUBMISSION: Parliamentary Inquiry into Commercial Passenger reform

Leaving your country of birth in search of a better and safer future for your family is a leap of faith. Uncertainty daunts on every decision you make, unsure if this is the best thing you can do for your family. A glimmer of hope was instilled in me as my Australian visa was accepted, for I would soon be entering a land of opportunity and fairness. I migrated to Australia thirty three years ago from a war-torn country hoping to build a better future for my family in the land of opportunity and the Fair Go. Thirty one years ago, I started working as a Taxi Driver in Melbourne, servicing the community, helping the elderly and the disabled with all my heart, cheering up the sad and laughing with the happy. I value each of my passengers very much and they appreciate my help and service. In 2003, I decided to secure my family's future by taking a mortgage out on my house to buy my own Taxi License for \$330,000. I've been working day and night, long hours, without any holidays or even sick days to make the repayments. I am still trying to pay off the debt. My hope was to be able to self-fund my retirement when the time came.

On the 23rd of August 2016, and after nearly two years of Uber operating illegally and unfairly monopolising the industry, the Premier of Victoria, Mr Daniel Andrews, announced that he is going to do away with all Taxi Licenses. That means he is going to take away my thirty years of hard-work and take away my future retirement.

The decision from the Premier and his party MPs has left me, and thousands of others in my situation, devastated, heart-broken, hopeless and helpless. This destroyed me financially and emotionally, I am left with a huge mortgage and decades of hard work gone to waste; even with the 100k and some fairness fund money. At fifty eight years old, it's like I'm starting from scratch again but this time, with no hope because I will never be able to pay off my remaining debt before I die unless I sell our family home and go back to renting. This is as a result of my income dropping by at least 50%. Other states have not followed the wrongful path left by the Victorian government; they legalised ride sharing and left taxi licenses alone.

The Labor government had no reason to do what they did with our licenses and in turn unjustly and cruelly ruined my lifetime achievements. The emotional burden this has put on me and my family is unbearable and has resulted in me in returning to depression medication.

How can my government justify itself with unreasonably low payout amounts; acting as if we found our taxi licenses instead of putting in decades of blood, sweat and tears to get this far. Working day and night for so many years has had its toll on me in the hopes of providing for my family and funding my retirement although now it seems like it was all for nothing.

When you purchase a Taxi license, it is as if you are entering in a partnership with the government because they are the ones who issue the licenses in limited numbers and under heavy regulation which gives you the exclusive right to pick up passengers and make a living as a driver. Nobody else can use their private vehicle to pick up anyone for money. This heavily regulated partnership is why taxi licenses held their high value. We of course entered into this partnership with the understanding that we were purchasing a valuable asset, and all of a sudden the government has decided to back out of the partnership with no regard for the condition they've left us in. Some license owners have lost their lives as a result of the governments actions and the rest of us are still suffering under the financial hardship and crippling depression from all of this.

The Labor government came up with this so-called "fairness fund" to supposedly help license owners with their financial ruin. However, a lot of license owners have received no help at all while others only received minimal help. It really does not deserve the name 'fairness fund' - there is nothing fair about it. The transport minister Jacinta Allan

continues to say that the compensation is the most generous of all the states, but she was misleading the public by leaving out the fact that no other state has revoked taxi license and brought their value from \$500,000 to \$0.00.

So please find in it your heart to feel our struggle and help me and others to get back what has been stolen from us and restore our hope in "a fair go for everyone".

George Chayeb