

BRISBANE WATER LIMOUSINES

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Director, Point to Point Implementation
Freight, Strategy and Planning
Transport for NSW
PO Box K659 Haymarket NSW 1240

27 February 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Your letter concerning bus lanes and HC plated vehicles

Thank you for your letter of 23 January 2017, however I don't believe you have adequately answered the issues I raised. 1) Why is it necessary to recall HC plates at all? and 2) Why can't registered hire cars continue to use bus lanes after 2020?

I agree with your first 3 paragraphs in as much as the industry was over regulated and overcharged and certainly change was needed...However the question remains, why is it necessary to recall HC plates? I don't believe that wiping out the industry is a fair and equitable outcome to supposedly "level the playing field" as you put it. Passengers pay a considerable amount of money to use hire cars and are justifiable in expecting exclusivity and a quality service, not to have that service eroded by the loss of amenity and service. The retention of HC plates is, I believe, no different to any other private vehicle fitting personalised plates and therefore should be maintained in reserve for legitimate hire cars?

In regard to your fourth paragraph concerning bus/special purpose lane usage and "levelling the playing field" I again have some concerns. Levelling the playing field, as you put it, does not necessarily mean going to the lowest common denominator is the best option or outcome to level that said playing field. It is my understanding taxis will be able to continue using bus lanes therefore it appears the field is in fact far from level. This is compounded by the fact that HC passengers pay a premium to use our services, so why shouldn't those passengers enjoy the same privileges as passengers paying considerably less in a taxi, is that "level"??? Even if you persist in recalling HC plates, bus/special purpose lanes should still be made available to registered hire cars, regardless of the number plate as they currently are for motorcycles etc..

In regard to ridesharing organisations etc, passengers who choose to use those services are using "private" motor vehicles and they should consequently face the same restrictions as any "private vehicle" and not as an extension, force legitimate hire car operators to face the same restrictions with the loss of whatever remains of a legitimate hire car service. That is

not “levelling the playing field” it is simply taking an easy option to appease a huge organisation at the expense of an established industry.

Whilst in the short term your proposals may only significantly impact the hire car industry, and as has already been seen with taxis, but in the long term will negatively impact passengers and I consider will negate the intended outcome, which is to remove unnecessary or underutilised vehicles off the roads to reduce congestion.

In regard to your first paragraph, yes I previously wrote to the Minister of Transport, mainly because I feel so strongly about these two issues and I believe the Minister should be made fully aware of what’s happening and the potential for the destruction of an industry and the possible backlash when passengers can no longer get the services they require in a truly competitive market and road congestion is not eased. I will be forwarding a copy of this letter to him also.

Therefore, again, I ask you to reconsider these two issues and to look at the matter in a way that does not cause the problems and deliberate restrictions to hire cars that your current decision will do, thanks.

I await your early reply....

Yours faithfully,

Ian & Natalie Volke

Brisbane Water Limousines

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Copy to: NSW Minister of Transport, The Honourable Andrew Constance