

From: Leporello Gatos
To: [pointtopoint](#)
Subject: Point to Point short submission
Date: Tuesday, 9 May 2017 2:50:53 AM

Arthur Katakalos

■

A Submission re: Point to Point new draft of regulations.

Dear Ms Wise,

Let me first congratulate you on your appointment by the minister, as Commissioner of Point to Point Transport. My very best wishes to you for a very successful term in this very difficult task you have been appointed to.

I have been a part of the taxi industry since 1970, the first 5 years as a driver and after that, as a taxi plate owner, serving the Sydney travelling public to the best of my ability.

My taxi plate value increased slowly over the many years, mostly as a result of inflation, and I always thought of it as my form of superannuation, when age would get the better of me and I would not be able to drive anymore.

Sadly, the arrival of "ride sharing" form of transportation, caused the huge drop of taxi plate values to, almost half. This resulted in drastic changes in my retirement plan which, I cannot afford any more and so, here I am at 71 years of age forced to continue driving. After this, instead of being a self funded retiree, I will have to become a burden to the 'tax payer' depending on an age pension for survival.

All this as a form of introduction to myself and my circumstances.

.....

Now,

after reading carefully the document titled 'Regulatory Impact Statement', I would like to bring to your attention a number of facts that have a great impact in the Taxi industry and the service we provide to the public at large.

A) The costs of keeping and maintaining a taxi cab in Sydney.

The so called "radio fees". A monthly charge by PRIVATE companies (aka 'networks') of \$ 700 (in the case of 13 Cabs, where I belong). This is a cost of \$ 8,400 per year paid by the taxi owner / operator. This amount is a gross overcharge on behalf of the 'networks' and does NOT represent any form of value for the driver.

This is because, again on a monthly basis, we don't get enough work from the radio system to cover it, let alone make any real financial gain from it. There is days that the driver doesn't do ANY radio work at all. We have proposed to be charged on a 'pro rata'

basis (i.e. a small amount per job taken) which the networks rejected 'point blank'.

In the 'old days', a radio (and a radio network) were essential in order to provide the public with the ability to 'call' a taxi cab on the phone for a home pick up.

Now days, modern technology with mobile devices and the applications that come with them, has made the concept of a radio set dispatch system in a cab, antiquated and obsolete.

It is clear then that, a taxi does NOT any longer have to belong to a network to be a 'booking service provider', as it can perform this role DIRECTLY with potential passengers with his/her mobile device, taking private bookings.

This would put an end to the amount charged monthly by these PRIVATE companies which is a form of extortion as, the Transport Act as it was set in the past, forced every taxi owner to belong to a network and thus, pay this extra ordinary amount each month, adding massively to the expense of running a taxi cab.

Again, in the 'old days' these taxi networks were formed as co - operatives belonging (and accountable) to their members and 'radio fees' were decided at the AGM by vote. As time went past, these co - operatives transformed into private companies, and since then, DICTATE the amount they charge the drivers without any form of consultation.

So, in view of all this, my recommendation would be the abolition of compulsory network participation by any taxi cab in Sydney, and NSW at large.

The 'networks' may claim that they are the providers of security camera and alarm certificates.

So far, this is true, however, given the opportunity there may be other security facility providers, such as established security companies, that can provide the necessary monitoring and certification of such safety equipment, at a price much lower than the \$ 700 asked by the 'networks'. I am certain, in a free market environment, several companies that specialize in home surveillance security and response, would be forthcoming in taking over the role of taxi security at a much lower cost.

The net result of lowering operating costs in Taxi Cabs will be a lower cost to the consumer, the travelling public in NSW and thus, making taxis more affordable and competitive with other forms of 'point to point' service providers.

B) The 'Green Slip' issue and a little about Uber.

This is the second largest expense of running a taxi cab in NSW, at an amount anywhere between c. \$ 7,250 to \$ 9,400 per year!

There's a monopoly of only one insurance company offering this type of compulsory cover for taxis (unlike private cars), and thence, this company is able to charge whatever they wish as a premium.

Ideally, with some government intervention, this amounts could come down and so, lowering again the running costs of a taxi, resulting in cheaper fares.

It is my opinion though that, other forms of 'point to point' transport services (like Uber for

example), should be obligated to carry a similar 'green slip' insurance, covering their paying passengers as well as pedestrians in case of accidents.

If this gets implemented, there will be a much more 'even playing field' between taxis and these 'other' forms of transportation, also resulting in better safety standards for the members of the public who choose to travel with an alternative point to point form of transport.

Also, while on the subject of Uber, it is absolutely essential that, their cars would also be fitted with a form of a suitable security camera which, in the case of a problem arising from the conduct of a passenger or the driver, would provide useful visual and audible information of events to the investigating authorities.

I trust that you will find my submission interesting and, possibly, informative and I would welcome any comments or questions that you may have in relation to the above matters. Please, don't hesitate to contact me via Email for any further information I can provide you with.

Again, good luck with the difficult role you have undertaken as a Commissioner, and I am certain that your good judgement will reflect on the outcome of these matters.

Kind regards,

Arthur Katakalos.

Sydney, NSW

Taxi plate owner [REDACTED]

DF