
Andrew Boukouras

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Rob Barton MP

Member for Eastern Metropolitan Region
Parliament of Victoria
Legislative Council

taxiinquiry@parliament.vic.gov.au

24 June 2019

Dear Mr Barton,

Re: Parliamentary Inquiry into Commercial Passenger Vehicle Reforms

I am writing to the Economy of Infrastructure Committee on behalf of my parents Andrew and Sofia Boukouras who have owned, leased and driven taxis for close to 40 years.

Our parents came here from Greece nearly 50 years ago, when we were young they put their heart and soul into providing for their family. With three children and our mum to support dad thought that the taxi industry was a sure thing, a long term investment that would still be in place after they retire as a source of income. Owning his own licence plate and then leasing a further 5 at the peak things were going really well for our family. Our parents were happy, still working hard, but at least seeing the rewards for their hard work. Dad always serviced his cars to try to ensure he didn't spend money on external mechanics. We have had a steady stream of drivers over the years, some have been with us for years and other more short term, but my dad was known in Oakleigh for being a fair man and always giving new drivers a go.

Then in 2017 - 2018 everything started to change. The implementation of Uber and other 'ride sharing' companies, new reforms and the deregulation of licences has resulted in our parents losing everything they worked so hard for.

Our parents have worked hard since the day they arrived here, dad often working 2 jobs, then driving his taxi up to 7 days a week. Mum, having 2 boys to raise and being the primary caregiver to our sister who was handicapped, still worked as much as she possibly could to help the family out. They are both now in their mid 60's and are at an age where we would love to see them enjoying their retirement, going back to Greece for the European summer and being able to spend more time doing things they love - fishing, gardening and of course spending more time with their grandchildren. Since these changes have come into effect dad has suffered with many health problems which have forced him to stop driving altogether. He would have loved to continue driving a few days a week for enjoyment, he knows every road in Melbourne! Instead depression, loss of sleep and regular medication for varying problems mean that he is unable to do what he loved.

The financial hit has been the biggest struggle for our parents. They spent the past 40 years with no parents or siblings of their own here with them. They raised their children, saved their money and worked so hard to try and ensure that they would be able to retire with financial stability. They are now suffering major financial hardship,

have had to ask family members for financial assistance and have changed the way they live permanently. A total loss of approximately \$800,000 means that they will now live with this debt for the rest of their lives. They did well over the years to save up some super however this money has now had to be withdrawn to pay for his leases. There was a payout of approx \$100,000 which has not covered any costs that are associated with everything that has happened.

Personal health, lack of income, financial instability and insecurity and at an age when our parents are meant to be looking to retire and enjoy relaxing after so many years of hard work, these tax reforms are the absolute worst thing that could have happened to our family.

When people hear about the changes to the tax industry they all know what's going on, they all understand what the Government has done - what they don't know is how these changes affect the everyday families. The struggle, hardship, anger, stress, and the ongoing feeling of being cheated and ripped off by our own Government is what NO ONE knows, unless they are in it.

Just imagine, you work hard, save up, buy your first house, manage to keep it and are hopeful to retire on its income, it is worth \$1million dollars...then next week you get told it is worth no more than \$80,000, just imagine.

Kind Regards

Sarah Boukouras