

Michalis (Michael)



13 June 2019

Dear Economy and Infrastructure Committee,

My daughter is writing this letter on my behalf as I cannot read or write English. I am telling you my situation and I would welcome the opportunity for you to help me as I am now seriously suffering since August 2016.

I came to Australia in 1969 and my wife arrived in 1970. I arrived in Port Melbourne on the Patris boat, after enduring more than 50 days at sea. We both didn't know anything about Australian culture, which included not being able to speak a word of English upon her arrival. However, both my wife and myself accepted Australia as our new home and started to build for our family. We both worked in factories in Melbourne, predominantly Schweppes, as we both had no formal education. We were both employed as blue collar workers, including working as cleaners on St. Kilda road office for many years- in excess of 25 years. We both held two jobs and unfortunately, did not see our children grow up as we had a mortgage to pay off. Many years later we decided to borrow more money and prepare for our retirement as we had no intention of being pensioners. Our ultimate goal was to become self funded retirees. We purchased this taxi license borrowed a very large sum of money when interest rates were in excess of 17.5% and we focused on paying this loan off, to prepare us for our retirement.

Meanwhile, our health has suffered predominantly due to the 'theft' of our taxi asset. Our taxi licence provided us with a comfortable retirement, however, once Uber started operating illegally and the monthly rent from our taxi licence was slowly decreasing and is now zero this has had very catastrophic consequences. Both financially, physically and mentally, The taxi license I have bought is now worthless, the rent that I had been receiving is now zero and I have become a pensioner, waiting for my pension to be paid fortnightly Victorian government announced these changes, and has paid me \$100K for something that was once worth \$500K and has not factored in the loss of my monthly earnings.

I have now resorted to becoming a pensioner which I find rather upsetting as I have never been dependent on the government for handouts. However, not only am I devastated by becoming government dependent, I am noticing that we cannot survive with this. (and I assure you we do not live a lavish life, a very basic home in Oakleigh South and a car 10 years old car is far from excessive).

My wife and myself paid for our taxes, including the enormous high interest rates above 17% when we had borrowed money and had to repay our taxi loan. The only money we have is superannuation (very little). This will now be allocated to our funeral costs.

We would prefer to die now and not allow our children to incur any more financial hardship as they have now been subsidizing food and payments in our family home. How long can

this continue, this is adding additional pressures on their own families, the taxi licence was designed to help them too, instead its created an additional problem in our life and now impacting our children too. Please help us.

Our savings at this point are less than 3\$k, in our CBA account. Our health is suffering and our mental well-being has been affected. We both see our family doctor regularly as we cannot comprehend the loss of our income and how this has negatively impacted us. Our financial loss and mental well being is completely destroyed.

Although, we do not have debt at this point in time, that is only due to the fact that we are elderly Australians.. This also means we aren't able to re enter the workforce which limits us earning an income..

This taxi license rent was designed to allow us to live comfortably, since August 2016, we haven't been and we will continue to suffer until our death. This rent has now ceased and how will we survive, the pension is not sustaining us now.

We came to Australia with dreams, to have a family, work hard and even leave our children with something. As we missed out on events our children have been involved in, including graduation ceremonies as we were cleaning offices and unable to take leave from work. However, we felt we would at least be leaving our children with an asset and a monthly rent. This is now not the case, therefore, not only are we being punished and suffering from the loss of income and destruction of this asset, but my children are too. Therefore, I am not sure how this relates to your selection criteria, or if anybody will correct this, however, how a Government can cease an asset without fair and reasonable compensation is completely ambiguous and wrong.

We applied for the fairness fund and was contacted by them after my daughter escalated the issue with the Omundsmen. We have not been given any assistance through the fund (with no criteria established) yet, they wanted to use my letter in their case study. Not sure why, as nobody seems to care.

Please help us, please consider my application seriously and please call me if you have any questions, I have been very honest and even embarrassed to dictate this letter to my daughter. However, we need some support as the Victorian Labor party has completely destroyed our life.

Yours sincerely,



Michalis (Michael) Kalopisis

