

[REDACTED]

From: ELAINE herold [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 18 July 2019 10:21 AM
To: wcpolicy
Subject: FW: RE WORK COVER FOR TAXI IND.

Dear [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] who has had the privilege of speaking with you personally, has passed your recent email on to me. I had heard through the grapevine there was a question of work cover within the Industry but have never received any direct communication regarding same. Personally I feel many other licence owners would be in the same position. At the last quarterly meeting of 13Cabs [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Hence I did not take any further action. In the eyes of Licence Owners the Booking Companies, namely, 13Cabs and Black & White have not been effected to the same extent as Licence Owners/Operators, they still charge \$811.80 incl GST per month for radio dues regardless of whether a vehicle is on the road 20 shifts only out of a possible 60 shifts. Also they have the privilege of leasing Licences from aged Licence Owners and operating a vehicle themselves. Wonder if everyone receives the maximum of jobs? Many of us also feel that TCQ is not working for us to the extent necessary.

After speaking with Brenda I am more conversant with the situation and am happy to let you know exactly where both my Brother and myself stand. I shall try to keep it as brief as possible.

Both my Brother and myself were supported entirely by our Mother who worked tirelessly to support us both and our household. She came to Brisbane from the country to give us an opportunity to obtain work. I am now 80 years old and started work in a clothing factory, but I hated it and Mum gave me the opportunity to go to business college where I spent 1 year learning shorthand typing and bookeeping. I commenced my first position at the age of 15.5 years of age and remained with the same employer for 12 years. From there I progressed to various positions acquiring more skills along the way. I worked all my life and saved to buy a home. During this time always meeting my committments and paying taxes. May I mention there was no such thing SUPERANNUATION when I or my Brother commenced work. Hence we looked upon the Taxi Licences as our Superannuatiion. As you can appreciate this has now been stolen from us together with our life savings.

My Brother still had 2 years of school to complete to pass Scholarship when we came to Brisbane, and from there he commenced work at the age of 14.5 years as an apprentice Fitter and Turner. Earning a wage of 4 pounds 8 shillings per week. \$8.80 in current money.

He too saved and worked hard. Our mother worked as a cleaner at City Hall for many years until retirement age of 65 when she obtained the Aged Pension. To manage to pay a home off she took in boarders to make ends meet.

In the early 1990's my Brother and I bought 2 licences. We are a close family and have always been there to support each other plus take care of our Mother personally until she passed in 2003 at the age of 92 years. Our Mother worked very hard and contributed to our achieving and we both feel our Mother too has been let down by Government due their actions since 2014 and continued destruction of an industry that has been successfully operating for over 100 years. We never drew unemployment and always worked hard to be self supporting. We bought the licences to be self funded retirees and not be a drain on society. Also paying income tax to contribute to the essential services which are an essential part of life.

Naturally to find money to invest in licences we had to mortgage our homes. Prior to 2014 Banks and Lending Bodies loaned 80% of the value of a Licence. At April 2014 the price of a Brisbane Taxi Licence (averaged over the last 5 sales) was \$532,083.00. Seeing we had a Licence each we borrowed and expanded over the years to a total of 6 licences. These same Licences have been driven down by Governments lack of ability to create a level playing field to \$80,000.00 to \$100,000.00 in value. This leaves us with a Bank debt of \$1.182 Million dollars . Prior to 2014 the operation of 6 vehicles were earning a taxable income of \$600K plus per year. Now it is down by 70 to 80%. This now leaves us with a debt of \$1,182 Million instead of an asset worth \$3 million plus. Government originally sold these same licences via tender and only after an extensive feasibility study which incorporated the public demand, waiting time, etc. As late as 2009 I believe licences were tendered at approx. \$410K. Naturally licences have sold on the open market and have enjoyed a continual increase in value, on which Government also earned considerable Stamp Duty.

During this period Government enforced strict rules and regulations and every Licence Owner, Operator and Driver respected same. The cap on licences released was to protect the Industry and ensure that everyone associated with the operation of the industry made a fair and just income. Even today a Taxi pays \$4,261.50 rego and CTP per year, which I know is much higher than a Rideshare Driver. Not to mention the fitout with security cameras, hail light, mtdata, driver duress button, paint/decals etc. The rego is lower than in 2014 but way too high. A Taxi Licence owner paid highly for the privilege to operate a Taxi while Government simply let Rideshare enter for FREE. This is unfair and I believe it fails duty of care for the Australian citizen and lack of protection for Australian Small Business.

I Personally am now on a full aged pension and could face the loss of my home. I am 80 years of age and find my current position extremely stressful. To date there have been 56 suicides and this was reported by Alex Mann of the ABC in an extensive report he did on the industry a year or so ago. Perhaps there has been even more since then. I believe this leaves Governments in Australia with blood on their hands due to their lack of logic and inability to create a level playing field.

My Brother suffers from Asbestos Plaques on his lungs from when working in the engine rooms of ships during his apprenticeship and in later life is feeling the extent of this. Plus when he lived on acreage a neighbour planted a couple of acres of mandarine trees, and of course as they grew the spraying increased to the extent he was forced to sell. I personally experienced burning lips when opening the gate of the property. So imagine how it effected my Brother and Mother who lived there 24/7. They were using 14 different pesticides and herbicides. Upon the sale of the property he felt it prudent to invest in Taxi Licences to support him in retirement. To do this we decided to share my home, where we are currently living. My Brother is suffering extremely bad health and the stress is cruel and at the age of 77 it is not fair. Hence the reason I am incorporating his situation in this letter. Also he is still trying to support himself and not apply for a Pension. With the total Loan in his name he can only look forward to Bankruptcy and a life on the Pension. And I can assure it is a struggle to live on the pension with the cost of living. I have 2 cats and if it comes to the point they will be fed before me. You wonder if I am stressed, feel life is not worth living, yes I am.

Are you aware that there is currently a court case in progress against the Queensland Government on behalf of Licence Owners. This is a closed case and only those who have contributed are party to same. The decline of income due to approx. 16,000 rideshare operators driving the streets leaves little to be earned by a Taxi. There being approx. 3,256 taxis in Queensland, when there is only a limited number of people to hire same. You have 10 people coming to dinner and suddently you have 10,000 arrive what are they going to eat.

I have tried my best to outline where we are at without going into too much detail and this brings me to the point. Where do you think the Industry is going, and who is going to have the money to pay the extra costs of Work Cover, particularly when all drivers within the TAXI Industry currently have their own cover. We provide the vehicle, pay all expenses, make sure all Government requirements are met and the diver recieves 50% of the gross income he earns. Although it is a 24/7 industry all drivers are free to come to work or take any time off they desire. From the 50% remaining the Licence owner who operates a vehicle must pay all expenses and running costs. Plus provide for vehicle replacement and fitout. In my eyes an employee is obliged to report for work every day/night at a regular time, or at a prearranged time, not at will.

I would like to stress there are many people out there in a similar positiion to that of my Brother and myself. Some have already lost their homes, are on food parcels, etc. Some are also in nursing homes and cannot pay their monthly payments, due to the decline of Lease Payments. Everyone handles stress differently and imagine how those who have already committed suicide must have felt. As they have no future suicide is their next choice.

Should you wish to speak with me or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at the email address above. My mobile is [REDACTED] (but I do not answer if driving so always leave a message).

Regards,

Trevor Taylor
and
Elaine Herold (sister)