

email received on 03/07/2008 at 11.30 am

Dear Sir / Madam,

I do know that the dead line was finished on the 1st of July so I'm asking the Essential Services Commission to extend the submissions one more week and I will be submitting some of my views today on the 3rd of July - Thank You.

Referring to the report that came out a few weeks ago regarding taxi fares and increase of licenses, it will be very hard for me to describe or give a full and proper picture in a few words as I explained to Mr Michael Cunningham as I requested from him the possibility of meeting face to face with the people in charge of the report so accordingly he has taken my name and information for a possible drivers and operators group meeting with the ESC. For the time being I will try to be brief and make a few points.

The taxi industry is a service but it is a service at a profit, people make a living out of it which they do expect to make ends meet after every shift driven, one of our major problems is the flagfall we have long asked for a minimum charge of \$10 that covers 2 kilometers or the equivalence in time, the reason lies with the quality of jobs that we have per shift so we can conduct millions of surveys from depots regarding how many jobs they have dispatched but in order to be accurate we have to ask about the quality of those jobs for example in my company 85% of the jobs dispatched are under \$10 and with a simple work out taking in consideration how many cars are in the fleet and adding to that the street jobs the total amount of dollars per shift and the amount of jobs dispatched per hour will surely give a different result than the one that came out in your report, it is very nice to say that we want to make taxis affordable to everyone (politically sound) but unfortunately that is not the case in real life, if the driver has to make ends meet some people will miss out so I urge the ESC in order to conduct a fair fare assessment is to stand on the five or six main ranks in the city for a day with a board asking every passenger before they jump in the first cab on the rank about their destination and take note of the time that will take every taxi on the rank until they pick up a fare so the rest of it will be just mathematics, on the other hand quite often some radio jobs run at a loss to the operator of the taxi as it takes time and fuel to get to passengers which they either going to cross the road by cab (big percentage) or they are probably not home (false call) which makes me commend the ESC for recommending the increase of the call charge from \$1.40 to \$2.60 which I still believe should be at least \$4, but I can't believe that ESC recommended a drop of a flagfall as it gives me the impression that a proper research was not conducted.

Going to the second issue which is your call for 330 wheelchair accessible taxis.

I would like to inform the ESC that we already have heaps of vans sitting at the airport to make ends meet which make me wonder if a research has been done of how many wheelchair jobs does an individual van does per day?????? have you ever thought of the impact of introducing extra vans on the fleet of taxis, we are already a struggling industry as we cannot take anymore cabs on the road just check the ranks in the city and the suburbs and how frequently we get jobs as we have increased more than 600 cabs in the last 5 years. Wheelchair bound people need a special company that operates vans with wheelchairs during the high demand (9am till 5pm) not more 24 hour cabs that will have no work the rest of the day and will compete heavily with the existing fleet, ironically the same day the report came out the airport management sent a message to all cabbies not to turn up as the area was too full which resulted to a full scale fight amongst drivers which took the police half an hour to break it off, while that was happening I was sitting on one of the city ranks for fifty minutes to get a \$7 fare. We cannot push a certain service into the taxi industry as it disturbs the cycle. Taxis are there to fill up a gap in the wheelchair service not to carry the full burden as I mentioned to the minister in the last meeting (and channel 10 reported it) that we earn less than six years ago for the obvious reasons mentioned above added to that which was not taken into account is the increase of higher car licenses introduced by the VTD which anybody can buy one off the shelf at the VTD head office for \$60,000 (think of the huge revenue to the government). How are those cars going to make ends meet but to take a big slice from the taxi industry and tout at the airport for the cream jobs (another fierce competitor) and of course you will not hear one taxi depot including silver top taxis (controls

50% of the fleet) complaining about the introduction of new taxi licenses as it will generate a monthly fee of \$500 added to that their percentage on the cabcharges and EFPTOS (isn't business good).

Thank You for reading my email and I look forward to discussing any of these points in detail in the future.

Hosni Samaan