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Taxi numbers:

The high cost of licences is not due to their shortage, but because of the high returns which are built into the assignment system which are attractive to the investment market. Non taxi related people should be banned from owning cab licences. They should buy shares in taxi operators. Existing investors should be required to get a vehicle and have it managed for them by an operator as a transition (my proposal in this regard is quoted in the draft report page 150).

Shortages of taxis late at night in the city are more related to driver reluctance to service drunks. This is properly solved by reform of the liquor industry, as both federal and state governments are currently doing. One letter to the editor said how a young lady waited hours for a cab in a queue at Flinders St while young men were running on the road in front of passing cabs to attempt to stop them. Is there any reason why most cab drivers would expose themselves to danger by stopping in such an environment? The drinking age needs to be raised to 21 and late night licences cancelled, premises should close at 1am or 3 am as they did in the past.

Other shortages can be improved by more staff at taxi networks and better communications, we were far more efficient before the "pager" style communications system, as a skilled radio operator could find drivers to cover all jobs by offering incentives such as the next job in the area, or by explaining how to get to the location, or "come on drivers, its a regular passenger".

No new cabs are needed, 500 green tops have been added. Just this month returns have been lower and possibly this is a trend due to economic slowdown and petrol price increases. To add additional taxis at this time set the industry up for collapse with any economic downturn in the future. What has been done in New Zealand is just a boon to car manufacturers, it mean each driver buys a car instead of being crewed on one.

Flagfall and short trips:

Reducing the flagfall will work if picking up from a rank allows the imposition of the booking fee.

Currently people are being refused short trips off ranks by drivers who don't regard waiting 20 minutes to get to first car as being rewarded by \$3 out of a \$7 fare. The \$2.60 booking fee if controlled by the meter would work to encourage pick up of local radio jobs but how then to solve the problem of the short trip from a city rank? The best solution is some sort of minimum fare. Or a tips system as in the USA. Increased numbers of green tops have led to taxi queues lengthening and drivers setting up unofficial ranks outside just about any office building where fares can be found.

There have been complaints about the behaviour of drivers from 5 Star hotels when fares are to another hotel in the city. Allowing the imposition of the booking fee from ranks would also resolve problems in the city late at night, as taxis have no incentive to go to ranks, people walk down the street and hail the car in advance of the rank, whereas an incentive to pick up from ranks would make matters much more orderly. Currently civil people can wait long periods while rogues get cabs quicker, which is part of the broader picture. However due to the dishonesty of many of our newer drivers, or to put it another way lack of service orientation, we do have a problem where drivers are putting the booking fee on every job they pick up. This could be solved by an education campaign to the public so the

know their rights. In order for this to work a simple, non negotiable regime is needed.

Fare increase:

You can't say that another fare increase is not needed this year as the entirety of the 4% fare rise in March went to operators and this issue needs to be resolved the drivers got nothing. In the past the industry has been denied fare increases because of increased operator returns as a result of increased availability of drivers, due to the networks being able to test drivers, whereas in the past the VTD or equivalent used to do so. Overseas drivers who do not meet the standards applied to local citizens are being allowed to drive cab with an incompetence that is staggering. If drivers are to get 43% of the fare after GST and the fuel levy of the operators, then waiting time must amount to the minimum casual wage.

Multiple hire:

Multiple hire would not work if it is deregulated, the passengers usually do not want the driver to make any extra money and just split the fare between them. It needs to be win win, less for the passenger and more for the driver. Just this week when it was busy during a rainy spell I did a multi hire to Aspendale. The meter showed \$48 at the first drop and \$52 at the second, I charged both parties \$36. There is considerable passenger resistance to sharing cabs which needs an education campaign as it is the best way to lift productivity and handle backlogs of work. Drivers also need to be better educated in its use as many seek full payment from each passenger. Another principal is to only pick up people who will be compatible with each other, eg not a business man and a skinhead. There are only a few hours of each week when cabs are scarce, there are many multiples of that when passengers are scarce. Properly used multi hire gives an option to make the industry more flexible. I would recommend that multi hire rates are 75% of the usual fare to the destination while the cab is shared.

If one party goes a considerably shorter distance I work out their multi hire discount then give the same discount to the second passenger. Eg city to Richmond normally \$12, charge \$9, next drop off Camberwell \$25, deduct \$3 from second passenger's fare. If it involves diverging from the shortest distance to the second destination I give a more flexible approach, sometimes charging the first drop off full fare so as to be able to pass a reasonable discount to the second. Multi hire applies as follows, if there is a couple who are together, they are treat as just one party, and if a single extra person is added the fare would be 75% for the couple eg \$15 for them and \$15 for the single person, total \$30. I would suggest that if there are 3 separate fares in a multi hire, which I have perhaps only done once in 26 years, then the rate should drop to 66% per party. Unless a formal structure is continues there will be either no point in attempting to help people get home and drivers will drive past stranded young women, and secondly drivers will exploit the situation to charge their own prices. Given the low skill level of most of our drivers and the issue of high driver turnover, it is beyond the abilities of most drivers. However it is possible to ask the query operator for a quote to a suburb, improved computers in cabs may allow drivers to estimate correctly the fare to suburbs and agree upon the relative payments of parties at the start of the fare.

Bailment agreements

"Increased transparency" in the development of bailment agreements does not change a one sided system where the VTA does what it likes.

The bailment agreement must be government approved. AWA's are illegal under federal law.

David Griffiths

driver 26 years.