

To whom it may concern,

As a taxi driver and operator for the past 32 years, I wonder if you have ever asked yourselves why thousands of customers in the inner city area, (IE; Southbank, Richmond, South Yarra etc.), cannot hail a taxi cab in peak hours?

With the current fare structure, it encourages taxi drivers like myself to choose long fares over shorter fares which often utilize the freeway. Under the current structure, one hour on the freeway with the rate at \$1.67/km equals \$167.00 an hour. We are over-charging our clients! In high volumes of traffic, with speeds below 21 km/hr, the rate is currently 56.6 cents per minute or approximately \$33.00 an hour. Taxi drivers are short changed in this instance! In any particular time/distance of travel in any designated fare, the running costs of a taxi are still very similar as the taxi cab is still in motion. Therefore the major difference in the two fare structures at present should be raised and lowered respectively to achieve a closer and more consistent fare structure.

Based on my experience in the industry, I recommend that fares should be based on the time spent in the taxi cab, not the distance as is in the current fare payment structure.

As a calculated suggestion, \$1.30/km is sufficient, although time should be at least \$1.00/minute.

With today's current payment structure, it does not matter how many green or pink or purple-top taxi cabs are released; you simply are encouraging taxi cab drivers to avoid short fares in high volumes of traffic and stay vacant awaiting longer fares often involving travelling on the freeways.

I am sure 95% of the general public out there utilizing taxi cabs are more than happy to pay \$15.00 for a minimal fare in peak times. The flag-fall should be \$15.00 in peak-times; which will include first five kilometers, or first 15 minutes, whichever comes first.

Regards,

Chris Vratsidis