

8th October 2013

Taxi Fare Review
Essential Services Commission
Level 37, 2 Lonsdale St
Melbourne VIC 3000

Re: Taxi Fare Review 2013-Call for Ideas

Dear Commission,

The following material is submitted by a WAT Taxi Driver with 18 months experience driving in Western Australia & Victoria. These comments, thoughts and anecdotal experiences are my personal views and discussions with passengers. Passengers are vocal and have varied views of their experience of short and long trips with myself and with other taxis. This letter is restricted to Wheel Chair, Disabled, Elderly, Young, and Special Needs passengers.

A summary of comments include

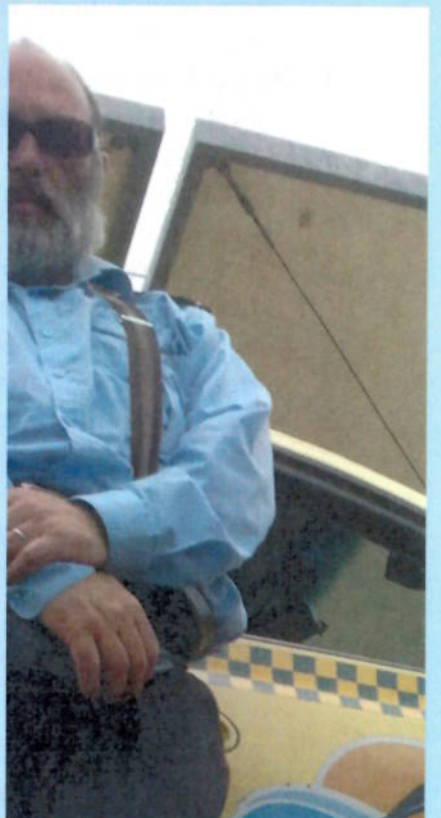
1. A variation in service quality exists within the WAT & Taxi fleet and a passenger desire to book directly with specific drivers.
2. The demarcation of the start, and end of trip. (This includes the transition from previous activity and to the next activity).
3. The government giving or forcing disabled to take increased personal responsibility of their care packages previously administered by care organizations.

Personal Observations

4. The current taxi fleet owners often find it difficult to obtain drivers to keep their vehicles on the road.
5. When I am dropping or picking up from Wesley Respite home, Brotherhood of St Laurence activity centre, and other Accommodation & Care Solutions locations I see their own vehicles parked and not in use, or that they have chosen not to have vehicles at all as they would not be fully utilized.
6. I have offered to step inside a shop to save an unload, re-load of wheel chairs to help out passengers, which I hear does not always happen with other drivers.

A wish list

7. That a driver could stay and help put shopping away, and other limited care activities, especially after shopping or an evening out.
8. A number of wheel chair bound passengers would love to be able to move to a front seat, or be secured up front. I have been driving an Oz Child passenger who (we, the career and myself) may help into a Hiace front seat next trip if the trip is a long one.
9. A vehicle with superior interior and exterior finishing that does not operate as an evening HOV. I spend some time most Saturday and/or Sunday morning cleaning the inside before starting the day.



A wish list (Continued)

10. The ability to bring onto the road additional vehicles during the day to meet peak disability loads with specialized PBO style plates.

Potential future Fare Structure

11. Combined Taxi and Care schedule where the driver provides:
- a. Assistance and/or Lifting into wheel chair, into outside clothes in preparation for departure and out of source location
 - b. Use of Lift equipment to help into a normal car seat
 - c. Point to Point service
 - d. Shopping, and other on route assistance
 - e. Help into drop off location, lift out of wheel chair, other care activities at destination
12. Training and Structure to ensure the appropriate fees charged for premium vehicle used and care provided.
- a. Create a Set of recommended Fees, with a structure where an added charge is permitted similar to where doctors can charge above the Medicare fees in the form of a gap, or surcharge similar to 13CABS Silver Service
 - b. With "Set" (or) "Sample" Fee Structures from the ESC review process that has variables that can be reviewed, or can account for "case by case" that can be made from time to time after taking advice from the Taxi Commission Stakeholder Reference Group (SRG) and/or Disabled Persons Taxi Advisory Committee (DPTAC). These specific needs can then be added as amendments.
13. Problems and Solutions
- a. Many Care providers have work during breakfast, lunch, and dinner. With vehicles available, care workers could extend their earning income with Taxi work between the above work periods. This could increase the availability of taxis
 - b. Many disabled people are going to be made responsible for their own care packages, and by providing the above blended services, they have an additional services available without having to rely on taking a career with them in the Taxi
 - c. Existing Care services have extensive experience with offering & administering care packages and advising clients, and the taxi service network providers having the back office and booking arrangements in place to operate these services. A blended service could improve the mix of services available and speed the take-up of new services as needs arise

I am happy to be contacted for further detail or to visit and discuss any of the above comments at a time that suites the ESC.

Derek Mosely

