



THE DECIMATION OF THE VICTORIAN TAXI INDUSTRY

Peter Adamis Abalinx 15 December 2016

I am a great believer in free enterprise, small business as I am of the belief that these two concepts go a long way in employing the millions of Australians. It

is safe to say that all governments whether it is at the federal state and even at the local council level do and must continue to support such enterprises to flourish, even it means creating laws that safe guard the interest of the people.

Take for example the taxi industry in Victoria. Jeff Kennet to his credit overhauled the industry during his time and brought about some form of self-regulation as well ensuring cleanliness of taxis, good survive and uniforms to boot. This was a welcome change from the past where taxis owners felt that could do what they liked within reason. The Taxi industry took note and made the changes as required and got on with the job of transporting its customers to their destination.

Many years later when the taxi industry became more organised, competitive and in many cases inclusive because of the purchasing of licenses through good business sense and strategic financial decisions; some bright spark thought it would be a great idea to review the taxi industry and open up its inclusiveness to make it less competitive or if one goes further to break up the monopoly of the Taxi industry barons. In its initial stages this was not a bad thing as some believed that it the taxi industry was being controlled by the few and it was difficult to break in.

However once the initial report was completed, it was met with howls of dismay, disappointment and hostility. The reason being is that a dagger had been thrust deep into the heart of the taxi barons, making them penniless with three years of the reports impact. Protest after protest, lobbying and political influence had some initial impact which calmed the fears of many of these taxi owners who viewed their taxis as a form of superannuation and the means of putting food on the table. But more was yet to come and it caught many unaware of the repots true objectives of the report became apparent.

Thousands upon thousands of dollars were spent by the taxi industry, all going into the pockets of lobby groups who took the money and had very little to show for it. Many of these lobby groups are well known and I for one will not venture in the unknown as to name them as it will expose their ill-gotten fortunes built upon the backs of the taxi owners. Political figureheads and persons of interest on all sides of the political divide made promises, big porky lies and downright bullshit if you ask me. What the current government under Daniel Andrews has done leaves a lot to be desired. Matthew Guy has a wonderful opportunity to grasp the bull by the horns and use this golden opportunity to put pressure on the government to change its current stance on the taxi licenses.

Should Matthew Guy fail to do so, it will mean the death by suicide of taxi owners, families made destitute by the loss of license fees, homes being sold, people forced onto the street, employment changes in midstream and people going bankrupt at a time when the Government should be seeking solutions to finding jobs and employment for those in the State of Victoria. After all does not Daniel Andrews stand for the people and does not he represent the Labor people who are generally to be seen for the worker. The Taxi owners in a few cases may own two or four taxis through sheer hard work while others have amalgamated together to form an association and thus make their positions stronger.

It is hard to say whether the Taxi industry was targeted for reform and no one knows what the outcome will be in the near future. What is well known is that should the current Victorian government under Daniel Andrew continue to perform abysmally, then the burden of responsibility at losing the next election falls upon them and them alone. Taxi owners and those in the taxi industry are more numerous than we are led to believe. They can if they want to garner so much support, whip up a frenzy amongst the various Labor held seats which are precariously held and thus bring about the downfall of a Labor held government.

I am of the opinion that a number of taxi owners have fallen ill from stress and worry, two have been alleged to have taken their own lives, others have sold up and left the industry losing thousands of dollars and the remainder hanging on living in the hope that some government will sit up and take notice of their plight. The other downside for the Labor party will be donations and funds that are normally channelled towards Labor. These funds will soon dry up and some politician of the left will wonder where they went wrong.

Whatever the case may be, whatever the outcome, Victorians stand to lose in the end because the service provided by the taxi industry competitors will not be the same. We in Victoria need a transport industry that can be relied upon to deliver a service provided that serves within the realms of profitability and a win-win situation for all stakeholders involved. After all we live in a country where each man and woman is supposed to be given a fair go. It's un-Australian to kick a bloke down and the current Victorian Labor government is kicking those who in the past supported their policies. Let us wait and see what the Daniel Andrews Labor government will do. Far too many lives are at stake to take the easy road.

As always, apologies to purists for my poor grammar and savagery of the English language. I wish you all well and hope that this article does not cause ambiguity in the minds of those who read it.



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