

# Taxi industry a tech pioneer, not a laggard

I refer to the article "Time for taxi industry overhaul" (AFR, September 24). It incorrectly portrays Australia's taxi industry as closed to competition and lacking in innovation.

Rather than being "trapped in the dark ages" as Michael Smith claims, the taxi industry is a pioneer in the transportation market, with established companies all using smartphone-based apps to make bookings. This technology was developed within the industry well before ride-sharing companies and other unauthorised app providers

launched in Australia.

In respect of competition, there are no statutory limits on the number of taxi businesses that can operate in NSW. There are more than 100 authorised networks and thousands of individual operators and drivers, all of whom compete in an open market.

Sydney has the most taxi plates per capita of any capital city in the country, with more than 800 new taxis being released into the market over the last four years.

The Harper review supports a deregulated system with little or no

oversight from governments. History has repeatedly shown that this policy approach for the taxi industry has resulted in significant market failure with standards falling and costs to consumer rising.

Recent events in the United States with surge pricing, discriminatory behaviour and criminal activity occurring within ride-sharing services is a salient reminder of this situation.

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## Open all hours

In reference to the letter on pharmacies "Short-term gain, a pain elsewhere" (AFR, September 25), Tim Hewitt probably travelled to Britain or the US, where Walgreen and a host of other pharmacy chains, open for 24 hours and offer the same services as Australian community pharmacies.

The pharmacy lobby needs to lobby for more competition, but rather than

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