



**Letter to the Editor – CHOICE Online
20 November 2014**

COMPETITION ON A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD OFFERS TRUE CHOICE FOR CUSTOMERS

Dear Editor

I refer to the article titled: “Draft Report Shows Promise” by Sarah Agar published on the CHOICE website, 18 November 2014, referring to draft recommendations of the Harper Review which seeks to deregulate established industries under the guise of creating competition.

While of course everyone wants cheaper prices, the reality is that you get what you pay for, and high standards of safety and reliability mean that there is a need to ensure that these costs can be covered. As the taxi industry is privately funded, it needs to recover these costs through the farebox.

Experience in other jurisdictions where regulations have been relaxed has clearly indicated that standards fall and customers end up paying more. These policies therefore do not benefit the consumer.

One only has to look at the experience of London (minicabs), Dublin and Auckland (to name but a few) to see the effects of the recommendations that the Harper Review promotes essentially leads to higher costs.

Your article is therefore correct in stating that “more choice does not always lead to better outcomes for customers”. The NSW Taxi Council also wholeheartedly agrees with the statement that “reforms should put customers’ needs first”.

The taxi industry welcomes and is actively campaigning for competition on a level playing field, as this most certainly puts customers’ needs first. Current “ridesharing” transportation services are only able to offer cheaper prices because they are ignoring the law, thereby putting public safety at risk. This is not in the consumer interest.

The NSW Taxi Council would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with CHOICE further so that we can work collaboratively in the best interests of the consumer.

Yours sincerely

**Roy Wakelin-King
Chief Executive
NSW Taxi Council**