



Letter to the Editor
13 July 2015

Dear Editor, Fairfax Media publications

I refer to the article titled: "Shining a light into the rotten core of the taxi industry" by Secretary of the NSW Transport Workers Union (TWU) Michael Aird, published in Fairfax Media publications on 13 April, 2015.

The comments of the TWU are both ignorant and naive.

Uber X is Workchoices on steroids and to attack the regulated taxi industry at a time when Uber X is seeking to destroy the livelihoods of many taxi drivers and operators is simply an own goal.

To criticise the laws that govern the relationship between taxi drivers and operators just because they have a historical legacy is like questioning the validity of the Magna Carta. The principles around drivers 'bailing' a taxi is common practice nationally and internationally and one which the majority of taxi drivers are content with. There are many examples in the economy where an independent business, such as that of a taxi driver, rents an asset to carry out their trade.

Furthermore, NSW Taxi Industry drivers are provided with statutory industrial protections including provisions for leave and other important worker entitlements. In this regard, the NSW Taxi Industry has some of the highest industrial standards of taxi industries in the world.

In this context, Uber X is on the record of opposing workers' rights. In the United States, Uber X and its major competitor, Lyft, have engaged in a price cutting war, sometimes up to 30% on fares, and the drivers on these ridesharing platforms have had to just accept this harsh reduction in their pay. This is the potential future of work in Australia for drivers if this unrestrained platform is given free reign.

The TWU's position as outlined in Mr Aird's article therefore generates considerable confusion, particularly as it is at odds with the Australian Labor Party. Furthermore it does little to further the interests of taxi drivers and operators in NSW.

It's about time that the TWU dropped its adversarial approach to the NSW Taxi Industry and recognise that the most critical issue right now is combatting illegal ridesharing. Instead of engaging in pejorative language about an industry that is governed by strong industrial provisions, it should join with the NSW Taxi Industry in protecting the rights of drivers, operators and owners, as well as the general public.

Yours sincerely,

Roy Wakelin-King AM
Chief Executive Officer
NSW Taxi Council