

PLATE-OWNER TAXIDRIVERS

Statement by Member for Southern River

MR P. ABETZ (Southern River) [12.58 pm]: I wish to put on public record my thanks to long-time taxidriver and plate owner Mr Satinder Samra for arranging for a group of plate-owner taxidrivers to meet with me at my electorate office on Monday, 2 November. I take a keen interest in their industry and well over 200 drivers live in my electorate. I know that most of them are currently doing it tough. Most do 12-hour shifts seven days a week, yet they struggle to pay their house mortgages, especially those whom still owe the bank money for taxi plates sold to them by the government as late as 2008 at a cost of \$135 000 for upgrading peak plates to full-time plates. The current downturn in demand has been exacerbated by Uber coming along and claiming to be a ridesharing organisation, although it is in fact a taxi business. The drivers who met with me are eagerly awaiting the outcome of the prosecutions launched against 28 Uber drivers by the Department of Transport. As the taxidrivers pointed out, if Uber drivers are allowed to operate without cameras, adequate insurance or adequate screening of drivers et cetera, the government will effectively have deregulated the industry while requiring official taxidrivers to adhere to all kinds of conditions and to continue to pay off their taxi plates. I commend the drivers who met with me, especially Brian Cranswick, who is a long-term taxidriver, for presenting me with a detailed, self-funding voluntary taxi licence buyback scheme that would not require any taxpayer funds. I commend the taxidrivers who met with me for their constructive approach and attitude.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 to 2.00 pm