

FREE MAGAZINE DECEMBER '18 - JANUARY '19

TACSAÍ

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COSTS OF
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A TAXI IN
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EDITORIAL

A lot of interesting things have happened since our last edition. MyTaxi have pulled an Uber and introduced a ride sharing scheme, much to the chagrin of a large portion of their drivers who voiced their discontent with a protest outside the company's HQ. It isn't just MyTaxi drivers who are opposed to this however as many other drivers from different companies etc. have voiced their opposition as you will see inside.

In other news; Chairperson of the National Transport Assembly, Tony Roe is calling on Minister for Transport, Shane Ross to act on a number of key issues. Number one on the list is a call to re-open the 20 taxi ranks which have been closed in key areas of Dublin City Centre in order to cut down on pollution and make the lives of drivers, passengers and even everyday commuters easier as well as lessening the adverse environmental impact. Roe is also calling on the Minister for action on the seemingly endless rickshaw saga. In Roe's words: Minister Ross has paid lip-service to date, but has not delivered. Rickshaws have been banned in both Galway and Cork yet they remain active in Dublin. Minister Ross has spoken about introducing legislation to regulate rickshaws but no action has been taken as of yet, and Roe is calling for real action now. Also on the agenda

is the issue of "Sham Marriage" taxi drivers operating in Ireland. While An Garda Siochana have exposed an alarming amount of men from non-EU countries paying women from EU member states to marry them so they are eligible to work in the taxi industry in Ireland.

We at Tacsai Magazine are always interested in hearing from drivers who have an issue to raise, or a story to tell. Don't hesitate to contact me. Happy Holidays, we'll be back in the New Year.

Keith Bellew, Editor

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THE COSTS OF OPERATING A TAXI IN IRELAND

The National Transport Authority regularly consults with stakeholders in the SPSV sector regarding the costs of owning and operating a taxi. It does this in a particularly structured way every two years when undertaking a fare review process; but the situation is constantly monitored for any issues that may arise.

The circumstances in which taxi operators offer their services vary widely, and this affects the costs that they incur. For example, the data available to the NTA suggests that the average taxi covers about 32,600 km per year while in-service, but some taxis cover more and some less, and this estimate excludes any private mileage that a taxi operator may incur. Nonetheless, if a number of assumptions are made, the costs that most drivers are likely to incur can be estimated.

Some costs are fixed regardless of how much of the time the vehicle is in-service - for example, the cost of a licence. Others are variable costs that change with the activity level of the taxi - the most obvious one being the cost of fuel.

One of the most significant costs of operating an SPSV is the cost of insurance; this is fixed for each particular driver, but varies widely depending on the driver's record and experience. The following section discusses the main costs that are likely to be incurred, in several situations. These costs are then included and summed in the accompanying table.

Fixed Costs (excluding Insurance)

Vehicle Ownership Costs: The cost of purchasing a vehicle, financing it, and the subsequent resale value depends upon what type of car it is and how much mileage is undertaken. An operator could place a sizeable down-payment on a vehicle, but this is money that could have been invested elsewhere. A more realistic approach in estimating the true cost of the vehicle is to see how much it would cost to finance the full purchase price over, say, five years, and to take account of the fact that it will have a resale value at that time. Of course, the calculation also includes the reduction in the actual cost of some wheelchair-accessible taxis (WAT) that benefit from a grant. The table shows the average cost of owning a vehicle over five years, after taking into account resale value and the receipt of a grant where applicable: it can be as high as €6,737 per year for an almost new eight seater vehicle, and as low as €1,815 for a five year old WAT.

Dispatch Affiliation and Commission Fees: Almost two out of every three drivers in Ireland are aligned to a dispatch service that allocates them work based on requests from passengers. Receiving these orders comes at a cost. Dispatch operators traditionally charged a fixed fee per



week to the driver, but more recently the taxi-app model involves paying a commission on each trip assigned to the driver. Regardless of the approach, a driver working full-time could expect to pay in the region of €4,752 per year. It is important to acknowledge that this cost can be avoided by not affiliating with a dispatch operator, but a driver will then need to rely almost entirely on work sourced on-street or at ranks.

Other Fixed Costs

Not including Insurance, the other fixed costs of operating a taxi include motor tax, licensing and testing fees, and costs relating to taximeters.

The most significant variable cost of running a taxi is fuel, and the figures supplied in the table assume that a taxi is in-service for 32,600 kms per annum. The cost of this fuel is highly dependent, not only on the mileage covered and the type of fuel, but on the model and condition of the vehicle. Fuel costs to drive 32,600 km per year vary, from €1,720 for a newer saloon vehicle, to just under €3,000 for an eight seater taxi of the same vintage. Those who drive mainly in free-moving traffic,

outside of towns and cities, are likely to pay less.

Like fuel, servicing costs vary with usage and by vehicle. Tyres cost more for larger vehicles than for small ones, and items such as brakes, batteries and windscreen wipers need regular replacement in high-mileage vehicles. Cleaning the interior and exterior of a vehicle is a regular requirement for a vehicle used as intensively as a taxi, and many driver's use professional car washing and valeting services, for which they can expect to pay €988 per annum. Other miscellaneous running costs are about €300 per annum for a standard vehicle. The mechanisms that make a vehicle wheelchair accessible need to be maintained, and so in that regard the operator of a WAT can budget for an additional €100 per year in miscellaneous running costs.

Insurance Costs

Insurance costs for taxis vary widely, and can change relatively quickly. Requesting a quote from an insurance company or broker is the best way for a driver to reliably determine the figure that applies to their own circumstances. Research undertaken by the NTA suggests that the following factors are important to consider:

- There is no fixed market price for a given set of conditions
 - different insurers are more competitive for different driver histories and vehicle types.
- There is often no significant difference between the cost of insuring a hackney or a taxi.
- Vehicle Capacity matters a lot. Eight seaters tend to be much more costly to insure than smaller vehicles.
- The cost of insuring a wheelchair accessible vehicle is only significantly different than a saloon taxi when the driver is a new entrant. For an experienced taxi driver, the cost of insuring a WAT can be 5% more or less expensive depending on other factors.

The single biggest factor regarding the cost of insurance, for drivers of the same vehicle operating in the same region, is the insured history of the driver. A young driver, with five years clean history on a private car, and entering the SPSV business for the first time, can expect to pay at least €6,500 in the first year of driving a taxi, but within five years this cost has steadily fallen to €2,000; thereafter it tends to plateau. The difference between insurance costs for new entrants as compared to experienced taxi drivers is so significant that it leads to a wide difference between both in the costs of operating a taxi, as the table clearly demonstrates.

Although a new entrant can, in certain limited circumstances, obtain a Standard Taxi Licence (through being assigned one upon the death of a licence holder) this is not common. Those considering entering the SPSV business for the first time are far more likely to need to apply for a Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) licence, and should consider their likely costs on that basis. In that regard, they should also familiarise themselves with their potential to avail of the NTA's Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Grant Scheme.

This data has been prepared in good faith by the NTA, to offer preliminary guidance to taxi operators. The cost base can change over time, and no responsibility is taken for its accuracy in the circumstances of any particular operator, or at any given time.



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TOURISTS RECEIVE PAY-OUT OVER TAXI CRASH



A motorist who rear-ended a taxi at a Dublin roundabout fled into the Phoenix Park, a court has heard.

Circuit Court President Mr Justice Raymond Groarke said while such an action would inevitably have raised suspicions in the mind of the taxi driver, the court could not assume that because of this and other matters, the accident had been “a ready up”.

He said the defence put forward by the Motor Insurance Bureau of Ireland (MIBI) was also asking him to infer, because a passenger in the taxi had made a phone call in a foreign language to someone only seconds before the collision, that the caller was in contact with the rear-ending driver who had fled.

“This is a vast crevasse you are asking me to jump and I am not entirely comfortable with it,” he told the MIBI’s defence team.

The judge also referred to “conjecture” by the taxi driver that the driver of the other car looked Eastern European, and said the court would not be happy to rely on such evidence to establish identity in a criminal case.

Judge Groarke was dealing with €60,000 damages claims by each of four Polish nationals who were passengers in

the taxi and who were injured in the rear-ending incident at the Half-Way-House roundabout near the Phoenix Park on January 29, 2009.

Sylvia Wolasewicz (33) and her partner Mikolaj Urbanowicz (36), together with their friend Roman Woloniewicz (39) and his partner Marta Adamajtys (36), sued the MIBI for a total of €240,000 damages.

The four claimants, all from Tottenham, London, told the court they were on a first-time weekend trip to Dublin and they had gone into the city and had “got drunk” or had become “pretty drunk”. They decided to go to Temple Bar and called a taxi. All of them were injured in the collision and were treated overnight in hospital.

Within 48 hours of the incident, all four had attended a local GP, having been advised this would be necessary if they intended making a claim, and had attended a solicitor’s office.

Awarding them damages ranging from €4,750 to €10,000, totalling €30,180 together with District Court costs, Judge Groarke said he was convinced they were genuine by the fact two of them had failed to get proper medical reports from their treating doctors in England.

It seemed to him that if they had gone to such bother about an accident, they would have followed through with vigour to have “all the i’s dotted and t’s crossed”



Driver's recently contacted T.T.n.H. to advise of a taxi hub rideshare scheme being piloted by Mytaxi. On viewing the scheme it was our view this scheme operated outside NTA regulations regarding taxi meter guidelines. Drivers were deeply concerned with safety, and the difficulties with having strangers sharing the taxi and the fare. We immediately contacted the NTA who passed on our concerns to their legal department. We were informed on Friday morning that the scheme had been postponed prior to its pilot date 24/11. On Monday 26/11 drivers protested outside Mytaxi offices handing in a letter of complaint addressing drivers concerns at the higher commission rates being paid by Irish drivers, the company taking a percentage of driver tips and the safety concerns relating to driver safety at the proposed hub rideshare scheme. At the time of writing we have been informed the scheme has not been postponed indefinitely and we will continue to highlight drivers concerns.

College Green Plaza planning has not been granted by An Bord Pleanála. This proposal would have severely restricted taxi movements and impacted taxi driver's ability to ferry passengers quickly to their

destination. We have been advised DCC may make changes to their proposal and re visit the plaza plan.

Transport Minister Shane Ross recently announced a ban on motorised rickshaws. Drivers have been campaigning for this ban for a number of years. We encouraged drivers to contact their local representatives with a view to having this ban implemented immediately. The Ministers office has stated "a general scheme of a bill to amend the Taxi Regulation 2013 was approved at cabinet. This general Scheme is expected to be taken for pre-legislative scrutiny by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport shortly. It is expected a draft of the Bill will be published in the New Year". We would hope this Bill moves quickly through parliamentary procedures and the ban can be implemented as soon as possible.

The industry review is ongoing and a public consultation is expected in the New Year. We would encourage all Drivers to take part in the consultation and make their views known. Finally we would wish all drivers a safe and prosperous Christmas and New Year.

David Mc Guinness T.T.n.H.

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MAN FALLS OUT OF TAXI

Father-of-two killed after falling from taxi window onto busy motorway 'in fury over fare'



A father-of-two was killed when he plunged from a taxi onto a busy motorway in a row over a £70 fare. Tony Pemberton, 29, was with his girlfriend when he flew into a rage over allegedly being overcharged by the taxi driver on the way home from a rugby match.

His girlfriend, Sarah Perkins, told how Pemberton started punching the ceiling of the taxi and kicking the seats.

And seconds later she felt "cold fresh air" and realised he had fallen out of the taxi at 60mph on the M4.

An inquest heard he was hit by passing cars in the dark and died from multiple injuries.

The hearing was told the couple had been to watch a Wales v Australia rugby match at the Principality Stadium in Cardiff.

It was building labourer Pemberton's first time at the stadium and he was "excited" for the day.

Pemberton, of Pyle, near Bridgend, had eaten a meal before the match and later drank lager, vodka and a Jagerbomb with his partner.

After the game, the couple decided to get a taxi 26 miles to their local rugby club in Pyle because the train

queue was too long.

Ms Perkins alleged a £70 fare was agreed – and the taxi driver stopped for Pemberton to get money at a petrol station.

But as they got onto the motorway, Pemberton became very angry with the taxi driver.

Ms Perkins said: "The taxi driver said that the fare was changing and that he wanted more money. I think he said £80 and then he said £90. Tony was kicking the seats behind the driver. He was up and down.

"It was like a red mist. It was just a complete change in him. He was just angry. We couldn't get through to him. I've never seen him like that before.

"I was telling him to calm down. To sit down. I told him don't worry about the extra money. It doesn't matter. I tried to put my hands on his arm. He was hitting the roof with the side of his arm.

"He said he was going to walk, that he was getting out. It was as if he decided he decided he wasn't paying the taxi driver any more money and that was that."

The inquest in Pontypridd heard Ms Perkins had hold of her partner before he disappeared through the window of the vehicle.

She said: "I felt fresh air in the cab and there was a lot of noise. I had hold of his arm.

"He was moving around. I seemed to have lost my grip completely of him and he was gone. I couldn't understand where he had gone."

The inquest heard taxi driver Muhammed Jamil pulled over into the hard shoulder of the M4.

Giving evidence, Mr Jamil said a £75 fare had been agreed but Mr Pemberton had only paid £70.

The taxi driver said he decided to take the couple without getting the further £5.

He said: "I never asked him for more money. Never on the way. Not at any time."

Witnesses described the moment they hit an object on the motorway before dozens of cars pulled over.

Driver Michael Smith said conditions were "drizzly and dark" before he hit an object in the road.

He said: "We thought it was a bit of wood at the start. Our heads hit the top of the van. Pretty much everyone was going over it."

The inquest heard Mr Smith pulled over and was approached by Ms Perkins who said: "Have you seen my boyfriend he's just jumped out of the taxi."

The inquest heard Pemberton died from multiple injuries on 11 November last year.

Police say the taxi window is likely to have come out in one piece as there was no glass inside the vehicle. The window was never found by investigators.

Assistant coroner David Regan recorded a narrative conclusion.

He said: "The deceased died when he fell from a taxi onto the M4 motorway in circumstances where his intentions were unclear."

After his death, his family said: "Tony was well loved by all of his family and friends. He was the father to two young girls whom he loved dearly.

"He was always the joker, high on life and there was never a dull moment when you were in his company. He will be sorely missed by his family and friends."

LIMERICK MAN CONVICTED IN TAXI ASSAULT

A Glin man assaulted a taxi driver who was collecting clients from a local pub and caused €500 worth of damage to the taxi, Newcastle West Court was told.



Before the court was Edward Leahy, Main Street, Glin who pleaded to charges of assault and criminal damage at Glin last August 4.

About 3am on that date, Inspector Alan Cullen said, the taxi driver was collecting two passengers, one in a wheelchair, from a pub in Glin.

As he was putting the wheelchair into the boot, he was approached by the defendant looking for a drive home. The driver refused and was then punched in the face by Leahy. When the driver got into his car, Leahy pursued him and punched him a second time and then jumped on to the bonnet of the car, denting it.

When two men tried to remove him, he grabbed the wipers and damaged them.

Pleading for his client, solicitor Michael O'Donnell said there was a "history" between his client and the taxi-

driver, arising from an incident in which Mr Leahy felt he had been spoken to in a way demeaning to his role as a FAS worker.

"Unfortunately, he kept it in his head," Mr O'Donnell said.

He had drink taken on the night but would pay the damages, he said, outlining his client's difficulties.

"He has had numerous chances over the years," Judge Mary Dorgan said, adding that a probation report was needed which should assess his suitability for community service.

However, she warned: "There is no guarantee that is what he is going to get."

She also ordered a victim impact statement.

Convicting Leahy on both counts, she adjourned the case to February 5 and said that compensation will have to be paid by then.



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mytaxi carries record 4 million passengers over latest quarter

Storm Ali marks the app's busiest Thursday on record.



mytaxi drivers carried more than 4 million passengers over the third quarter of 2018, its busiest ever.

Storm Ali on September 20th prompted the app's busiest Thursday on record, with demand for taxis that day almost three times that of a typical Thursday.

mytaxi experienced a nearly 50% increase in demand for taxis to and from Dublin airport in the third quarter when compared to the same period in 2017, marking its busiest quarter ever in this respect.

The company's corporate offering also continues to expand significantly, with mytaxi's business-to-business arm growing 91% on the same period in 2017. Service levels to customers continued to improve with the average waiting time for a mytaxi down to 3 minutes 36 seconds, a 10% improvement on the same period in 2017.

Over the third quarter, 568 new drivers joined the mytaxi fleet, with 320 drivers in total now passing the NTA's challenging SPSV entry test using mytaxi's free online training platform, the mytaxi manual. mytaxi is continuing to offer incentives to drivers who pass the SPSV test using its high-quality training platform.

General Manager for Ireland at mytaxi, Alan Fox, said: "mytaxi is continuing to build capacity to match customer demand and our latest quarterly figures show that we are making ongoing progress in delivering for our customers. We want to provide passengers with the best service possible and so the ongoing expansion of our fleet is a huge priority. We also want to grow our service offering in other areas, for example by meeting huge public demand for more taxis at Dublin airport, as well as expanding our regional footprint, and so we were delighted to recently open our new office in Cork."

mytaxi announced in October that it was investing nearly €600,000 in Cork as part of expanding its services in the county. The investment includes the new driver office in Cork city, sponsorship of the 2018 Guinness Cork Jazz Festival,

an advertising campaign at Kent station, a driver recruitment incentive scheme and a marketing push to attract new Cork entrants into the taxi industry.

CHRISTMAS RUSH

mytaxi is also gearing up for the Christmas rush.

With the busy festive period approaching mytaxi are making a drive for drivers and after their success at Croke Park for Jobs Expo Dublin, Jamie and Chris from mytaxi, returned to meet potential candidates at the Jobs Expo Cork in Pairc Ui Chaoimh. mytaxi also have outdoor advertisements currently running in Heuston and Pearse train stations in Dublin and Kent train station in Cork, promoting to passengers the "Gift of the Cab" this Christmas. A driver Christmas Bonus is also on the way for all drivers on the mytaxi network that are opted-in to receive marketing.

You can drop into the mytaxi Dublin Driver Office at 11 Mount Street Upper and the Cork Driver Office in Northpoint Business Park if you have any queries in the lead up to Christmas.



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Wife of Murdered Cabbie Testifies

The wife of a taxi driver who was stabbed to death while working in the early hours has denied that her husband kept a kitchen knife in his car.

The murder trial has previously heard that the accused told gardaí that the deceased pulled a knife on him.

Joseph Hillen (24), of Glendesha Road, Forkhill, Co Armagh has pleaded not guilty to the murder of Martin Mulligan (53) at Carnmore, Balriggeran, Dundalk, Co Louth on September 28, 2015.

While he accepts that he inflicted the fatal knife wounds, Mr Hillen told gardaí that he did it to protect himself.

The deceased's widow Grainne Mulligan today told prosecuting counsel Patrick Treacy SC that she met her husband when they were teenagers and they married in 1986 after dating for nine years.

He worked as a coal delivery man and in 2000, for extra money, he started working as a taxi driver. They had two daughters who are now adults.

Her husband, she said, was concerned for his own safety and kept a bar on the floor of the taxi for protection. He also kept a small Swiss Army knife in the car.

Under cross examination, she agreed with defence counsel Brendan Grehan SC that her husband was a "formidable" man who would not back down in any situation.

She was worried when he started working as a taxi driver that he might come to blows with anyone who tried to rob him or cheat him.

She agreed that in a statement to gardaí she said he could be "thick and wouldn't back down in a confrontation". He kept the bar, she said, as a weapon if he needed to use it.

Mr Grehan put it to her that in August of this year, before Mr Hillen told gardaí that the deceased pulled a knife on him, she told gardaí that her husband kept a small kitchen knife in his taxi which he used for picking his teeth.



Martin Mulligan's widow Gráinne Mulligan



Martin Mulligan

She accepted that she made another statement about two weeks later in which she said she had been mistaken and that her husband in fact kept the kitchen knife in his coal lorry, not the taxi.

Mr Grehan asked her if she changed her statement because she realised it would be helpful to the accused man as it supported his claim that it was the deceased who

produced the knife.

She replied: "No. I didn't realise that. That wouldn't have entered my head."

Under re-examination she told Mr Treacy that the knife she was referring to was a short knife she had previously used for peeling potatoes. She said it would have been about the length of one third of an A4 page.

Earlier the trial heard from Sergeant Michael Kermath of Dundalk Garda Station who told Mr Treacy that he was in Dundalk earlier on the night that Mr Mulligan died when a member of the public gave him the registration number of a Toyota Avensis, driven by the accused, that had been spinning its tyres outside Ridley's nightclub.

When Sgt Kermath and his colleague Garda Damien Fanning saw the car they put on their blue lights and followed but the Avensis did not stop.

Sgt Kermath said it sped erratically and dangerously through the town towards Marsh's Shopping Centre, broke two traffic lights and left the town.

The patrol car followed until it became too dangerous and they believed they would not catch up before the border.

The jury of nine men and three women were then shown CCTV footage of the car spinning its tyres and speeding through the town.

The trial continues in front of the jury and Justice Eileen Creedon.

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TAXI DRIVER QUOTED €17,000 FOR INSURANCE

A FOREIGN NATIONAL quoted over €17,000 for taxi insurance for a year, was asked to pay nearly €5,000 upfront to keep his car on the road.

The issue of higher taxi insurance comes against the wider backdrop of much higher premiums in recent times, with the government's working group aiming to tackle these high costs facing difficulties in bringing them down so far

Faced with a choice between not working or paying the insurance, the Dublin-based man said it left him with little option but to pay up the deposit so he could stay on the road.

His situation is one common to a number of taxi drivers looking to get insured on Irish roads, who face difficulty in affording to do so.

The man was involved in one collision on Irish roads in the

past three years, although it was not while driving his taxi.

"The car is only worth €20,000," the taxi driver told TheJournal.ie. "I had a claim against me, after a guy said he had neck pain after an accident with the car. The cost of repairing the car was only a few hundred euro.

I'm in stress now today because I have to pay them that deposit. I don't have a choice or my car would not be fully covered.

Taxi drivers we spoke to after fare increases last year also cited insurance as a cause of complaint. One said: "My insurance went through the roof this year, with no real reason given. It'd put you off getting into this game."

The figure drivers are quoted however, can range vastly. Another driver we spoke to, with a 10-year-old car, and nine years' experience as a taxi driver was recently quoted €2,300 to renew his insurance.

Another, with a newer car but with much fewer years in the job, was quoted €4,500.

Jim Waldron, spokesperson from the National Private Hire and Taxi Association, told TheJournal.ie that he's heard of costs over €10,000 for new people coming into the business, but that it wouldn't always be the case.

Even for those not paying such costs in this bracket, many taxi drivers are still feeling the pinch in recent years, according to Waldron.

He also said that a company acquiring a number of taxi licence plates in one go is often better placed than an individual to source reasonably-priced insurance, with the individual usually facing a higher premium.

"Overall, the last three years has seen insurance go up year-on-year to about 35% higher," he said. "As an association, we've been trying to bring the cost of insurance down by bringing in more competition, and there are talks going on there.

Someone going in with 50 plates could get a more favourable insurance policy where an individual driver has been crucified for the last few years... It's a business cost, but there's only so many hours in a day that a taxi driver can work. The last thing we'd want people to be doing is to work morning, noon and night, and then have to hand what they've earned over to the insurance company.

The number of taxis in Ireland has already dropped dramatically in recent years, with the high cost of insurance often cited as a deterrent.

From a high of 47,222 drivers with valid licences in 2009, there were just 26,012 licences last year.

In all, there were 400 less taxi drivers on the streets in 2017 compared to the previous year. The majority of drivers (54%) hold a Dublin licence entitlement.

Earlier this year, the National Transport Authority launched a campaign aimed at recruiting 1,600 taxi drivers.

Its CEO Anne Graham said while having 26,000 drivers licenced "might sound like a lot, but they are not all available all of the time, which means there can be shortages at certain period particularly at peak hours and weekend nights".

According to NTA research from 2016, the average metered revenue per week for a taxi driver in Dublin was €635, with the high end stretching up to €1,189.

The question of the cost of insurance has been raised in the Oireachtas a number of times in the past year, as the government aims to arrest the cost of car insurance which

has skyrocketed in recent years.

In 2015 alone, more than a third of Irish drivers saw their insurance rise by up to 50% – a situation that descended into something of a blame game between insurers and the legal profession

Work has been done to rectify the problem however, starting with the publication of a fresh Book of Quantum in 2016, the first in 12 years, which officially crystallised the level of claims being seen in Ireland.

Furthermore, a recently published report from the Personal Injuries Commission has highlighted the "stark multiples" of compensation payouts in Ireland compared to our European counterparts.

Insurers say it is these payouts that lead to higher premiums, and the report says that taking appropriate action now would help to achieve a "greater level of consistency in Ireland in the assessment of general damages".

Waldron added that when a taxi driver has had an accident, it can be very difficult to avoid facing a spike in the cost of insurance.

"Absolutely, it shoots up," he said. "I can understand why it would be that someone would be quoted as high as €17,000 if there'd been a claim. It's very hard to switch insurers then too because the first thing they ask you on the form is 'have you had an accident?'"

Speaking at a Dáil debate last month, Independent TD for Dublin Bay North Tommy Broughan said that every deputy has been contacted "time and again by all kinds of hard-pressed constituents".

"We have also been contacted by distressed taxi drivers, who are in the public transport mould," he said. "Due to changes in their training and so on, they have had to come up with vast sums of money."

'That is insane'

Newer drivers driving their own vehicle, in particular, face higher costs.

Senator Jennifer Murnane O'Connor told the Seanad in June: "Many of us have stories of our own or have heard stories about the rising cost of insurance.

This week, I heard about a taxi driver who had been driving as a named driver on his company fleet insurance. He had his test and wanted to get a policy in his own name. He was quoted €11,000 in respect of a vehicle that is valued at €12,000. That is insane.

In a statement to TheJournal.ie, a spokesperson for industry group Insurance Ireland said it couldn't comment on individual cases, but added that "insurers make decisions on insurance cover based on their underwriting criteria, their risk appetite and their claims history".

"This will include factors such as the driver's experience, the type of vehicle, its engine size and its age, but the weighting applied to each factor is a matter for each company," it said.

Insurance Ireland pointed to the recent report from the Personal Injuries Commission which found that the average compensation issues for soft tissue injuries in Ireland is four times higher than in the UK.

"Insurance Ireland has been very active in advocating for policies to address the cost of claims in the market that affect all motorists and will continue to press for the swift implementation of the recommendations of the Personal Injuries Commission," it added.



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Taxi driver who sexually abused and raped his daughters jailed

A retired taxi driver who sexually abused two of his daughters and raped one of them over a 10-year period has been jailed for six years.

Patrick Byrnes (78), of Castletroy, Limerick, appeared for sentence at the Central Criminal Court yesterday after being convicted by a jury last July.

The father-of-nine was found guilty of 58 charges of indecent assault and two counts of rape on dates between 1975 and 1985.

The court was told that Byrnes began abusing his daughters when they were aged around seven, the year of their First Communion.

They lived in abject fear of him and have been left broken by the decade of abuse.

Three of the indecent assault charges involved Byrnes “willing” the family dog to engage in sexual acts with one of the daughters.

During his campaign of abuse, he threatened the two children that if they told anyone about it, he and their mother would split up.

Garda Tony Carmody said that it was only after the defendant’s wife died in 2013 that the two women reported the matter to gardaí. Byrnes denied all charges and continues to deny them.

Yesterday Mr Justice Paul McDermott noted that the case has split the family.

The court heard that the abuse happened on a twice-weekly basis for a period of 10 years.

The judge said the daughters were repeatedly abused by their father and lived a life of “abject fear”. Byrnes abused them with impunity.

He noted that both women said they were left broken by the childhood abuse.

The judge noted that Byrnes suffers from a number of health conditions including heart disease and osteoarthritis but he added that there was nothing to



Patrick Byrnes

suggest these cannot be addressed in prison.

He said that given Byrnes’s lack of remorse and his refusal to admit responsibility, the only mitigating factor he could consider was his age.

Byrnes might die in prison and he has given that serious consideration, he added.

The judge set a headline sentence of nine years for the rape and six for the sexual assault but reduced these by one year to take account of his age.

He suspended the final two years on condition that Byrnes is not in the company of any woman under 18 unless accompanied by another adult.

All the sentences are to run concurrently.

Gda Carmody told Gerry Clarke SC, prosecuting, both complainants waived their right to anonymity so their father, who they say they will never forgive, could be named.

Byrnes had worked as a lorry driver and a delivery man as well as a taxi driver and had never previously come to the force’s attention.

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ROE CALLS FOR ACTION ON KEY ISSUES

Tony Roe, Chairperson of the National Transport Assembly of Ireland has called on Government to re-open closed taxi ranks at key points in the city centre to tackle traffic congestion, pollution and make taxis more amenable to passengers. By Keith Bellew

We have had several meetings with the government in recent times. The last one we had was with [Junior Health Minister] Catherine Byrne, Fine Gael representative. This came after a meeting with Minister for Transport, Shane Ross. We wanted to keep her up to speed and also to contact Shane Ross to find out where he was with regard to our proposals. We have many proposals on the table concerning public transport, taxis," said Roe.

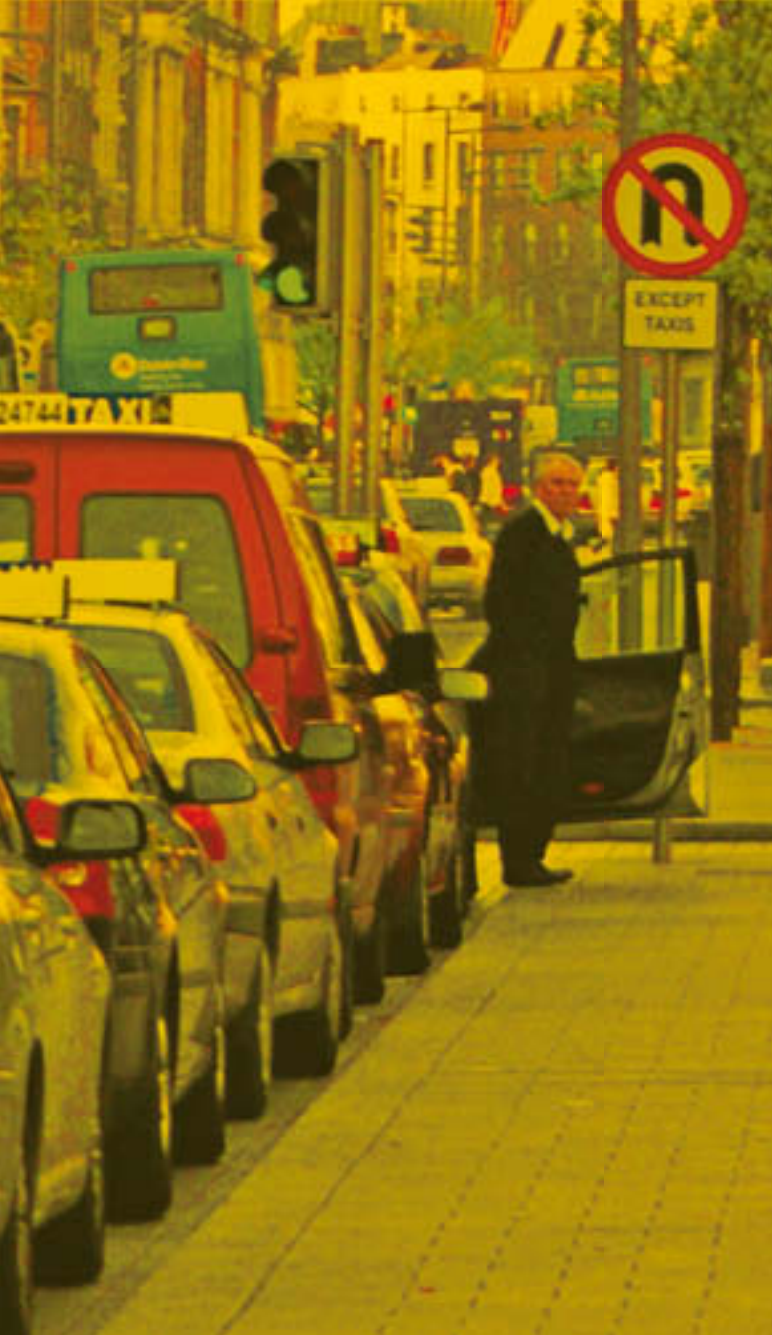
He went on to say that one of the key proposals was the re-opening of closed taxi ranks.

"We see this as a major problem. The taxi rank closures are blatantly causing a saturation of cars on the road unnecessarily. We've had over 20 taxi ranks in Dublin City Centre closing down. These ranks held over 300 taxis and

this means now that these taxis are driving around the city centre adding to contamination. A lot of these cars are diesel and they're adding to air pollution, oxide pollution and nitron pollution and its unnecessary," he said.

He went on to say that there is a very simple solution to this problem.

"We have proposed to Dublin City Council that there be 57 taxi ranks in the city centre but the complete opposite is now happening. We've had 20 taxi rank closures and it means that it's unnecessarily adding to congestion, pollution and contamination on the roads. There's a very simple solution, there's no rocket science in doing it. We've itemised these places, the council were looking for input from stakeholders and we put forward proposals as part of the National Transport Assembly Committee for 57 taxi ranks in high profile areas. This would alleviate the congestion on the



roads. What we wanted to know is; on what planet is it right to spread contamination and for traffic measures not to be addressed. The government says its encouraging people to use public transport. We should be encouraging people to use public transport and taxis are the only mode of public transport that are available 24 hours a day. If you look at corresponding countries the exact opposite is happening in Ireland. There is the likes of London that has Oxford Street, it has Piccadilly, Charing Cross, all of those high profile areas and they are doing the exact opposite, they are increasing taxi presence in those areas," he said.

He further stated that this country is working on a backward scale, which is old fashioned and harkens back to the days of tall hats.

"We are actually banning taxis in the city centre and doing away with the ranks that are there, and now tourists are being left stranded, shoppers are being left stranded. We want to see the taxi ranks that have been closed down re-opened again, we want to give people more access to public transport. There are businessmen now that are complaining, saying that they can't get taxis at certain times. A lot of people will ring up taxis, and the taxis can't make their way to them because they're stuck in traffic. And now we are the major factor in contributing to major congestion

on the roads. It is alarming why this problem is not being addressed by the government, it can be easily averted and we just don't want a knee-jerk reaction where the government is just paying lip service. We met with Shane Ross, and i've asked for Shane Ross to be more effective and more efficient," he said.

He went on to say that he also met with Junior Health Minister, Catherine Byrne who is the representative for his area on October 15 and requested that she get back to Minister Ross to find out where they stood on the issue. He also said that the transport assembly conducted a survey with 500 taxi drivers which found that on average drivers are wasting between five and nine litres of fuel per day.

"This figure has gone through the roof, because there's tonnes of taxi ranks that are one now. It's just not right, it's easy to be rectified and by the same token; with the taxi rank closures we old see a shortage of taxis in the city centre at busy times of the day. The rank closures are all in high footfall shopping areas. We see this as a double-edged sword; its forcing hundreds of taxis onto the roads through rank closures and there's a lack of places to park. In recent times we have had 1, 000 new wheelchair accessible taxis coming onto the roads, and this is on top of the situation which was chronic, but now has gone to acute. The fleet has been extended by 1, 000 new wheelchair accessible taxis, and now due to the rank closures these taxis have acquired big overheads. Some of them have taken out mortgages on their homes to supply these wheelchair accessible taxis and now they have nowhere to go. They're stuck in taxis on congested roads, the roads are being further congested by ourselves being on the roads and contributing to this. We are calling on the government to act here and we'd like them to be not just reactive but more proactive here," he said.

He pointed out that many taxi drivers are involved in the delivery of blood which is life-saving work. He said that this issue needs to be examined and addressed and that it is disingenuous of the government to merely pay lip-service when real action is needed.

"It's been put on the long finger and really it's only going to get worse. We see this every Christmas and it's the same old same old. We have given the Minister plenty of time now, we have contacted him several times and there seems to be a lack of vision coming from the Minister on this issue. We are calling for further review because licenses (which the government are making money on) are still being issued and it is making a bad situation worse," he said.

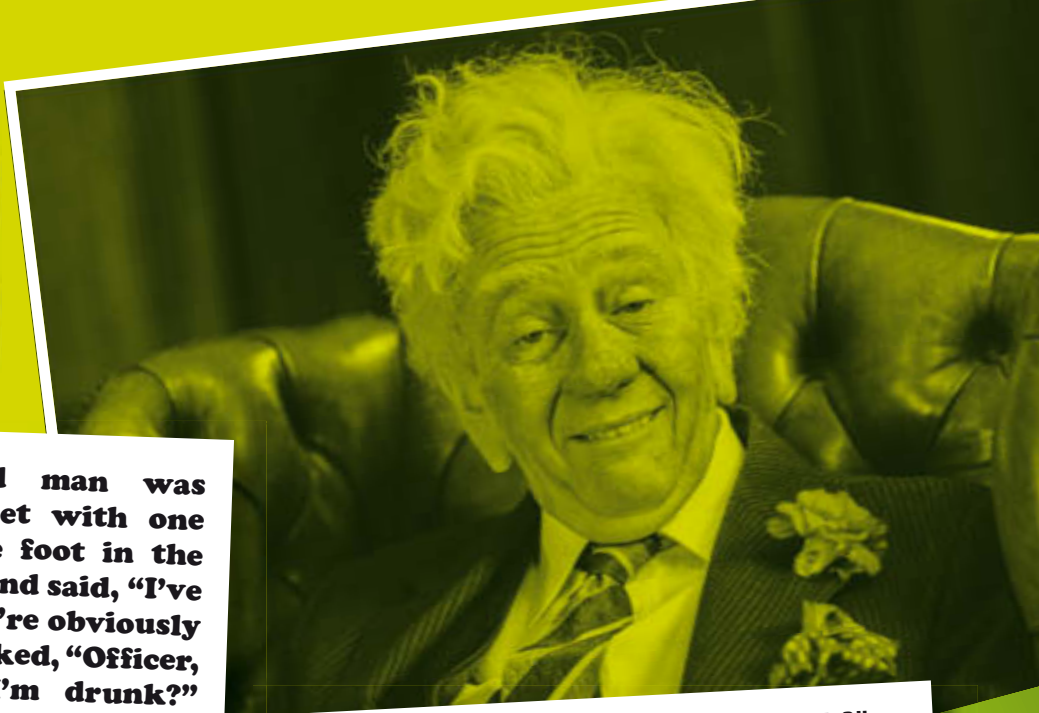
Another issue the Transport Assembly Committee is concerned about is the operating of rickshaws in Dublin City Centre which the Minister was contemplating banning.

"We want to know where the minister stands on that because he has talked about bringing out various things on that where they would have to be tax compliant," he said.

Yet another issue of concern is the practice of sham marriages in which immigrants from non-EU countries are paying women from within the European Union money to marry them. Recent spot checks carried out by An Garda Síochána revealed that there are a very large amount of these men driving taxis in Ireland, and the National Transport Assembly is looking for action to tackle this also.

At the time of going to print neither Transport Minister, Shane Ross, nor Junior Health Minister, Catherine Byrne had responded to requests for comment.

Knock Knock



A completely inebriated man was stumbling down the street with one foot on the curb and one foot in the gutter. A Garda pulled up and said, "I've got to take you in bud. You're obviously drunk." The wasted man asked, "Officer, are ya absolutely sure I'm drunk?" "Yeah buddy, I'm sure," said the Garda, "Let's go." Breathing a sigh of relief, the wino said, "Thank goodness. I thought I was crippled."

A man walks into a bar and sits down. He asks the bartender, "Can I have a cigarette?" The bartender replies, "Sure, the cigarette machine is over there." So he walks over to the machine and as he is about to order a cigarette, the machine suddenly says, "Oi, you bloody idiot." The man says with surprise in his voice, "That's not very nice." He returns to his bar stool without a cigarette and asks the bartender for some peanuts. The bartender passes the man a bowl of peanuts and the man hears one of the peanuts speak, "Ooh, I like your hair." The man says to the bartender, "Hey, what's going on here? Your cigarette machine is insulting me and this peanut is coming on to me. Why's this?" The bartender replies, "Oh, that's because the machine is out of order and the peanuts are complementary."

A guy spots a sign outside a house that reads "Talking Dog for Sale." Intrigued, he walks in. "So what have you done with your life?" he asks the dog. "I've led a very full life," says the dog. "I lived in the Alps rescuing avalanche victims. Then I served in Iraq. And now I spend my days reading to the residents of a retirement home." The guy is flabbergasted. He asks the dog's owner, "Why on earth would you want to get rid of an incredible dog like that?" The owner says, "Because he's a liar! He never did any of that!"

**Fred: "Why do elephants wear red nail polish?"
Bob: "I don't know, why?"
Fred: "To hide in cherry trees."
Bob: "But I've never seen an elephant in a cherry tree."
Fred: "See. it works."**

During an impassioned sermon about death and final judgement, the pastor said forcefully, "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement." Glancing down at the front pew, he noticed a man with a big smile on his face. The minister repeated his point louder. "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!" The man nodded and smiled even more. This really got the preacher wound up. He pounded the pulpit emphatically when he came to the ultimatum: "Each member of this church is going to die and face judgement!!!" Though everyone else in the congregation was looking sombre, the man in front continued to smile. Finally the preacher stepped off the platform, stood in front of the man and shouted, "I said each member of this church is going to die!" The man grinned from ear to ear. After the service was over, the preacher made a beeline for the man. "I don't get it," the preacher said in frustration. "Whenever I said, 'Each member of this church is going to die,' your smile got bigger. Why?" "I'm not a member of this church," the man replied.

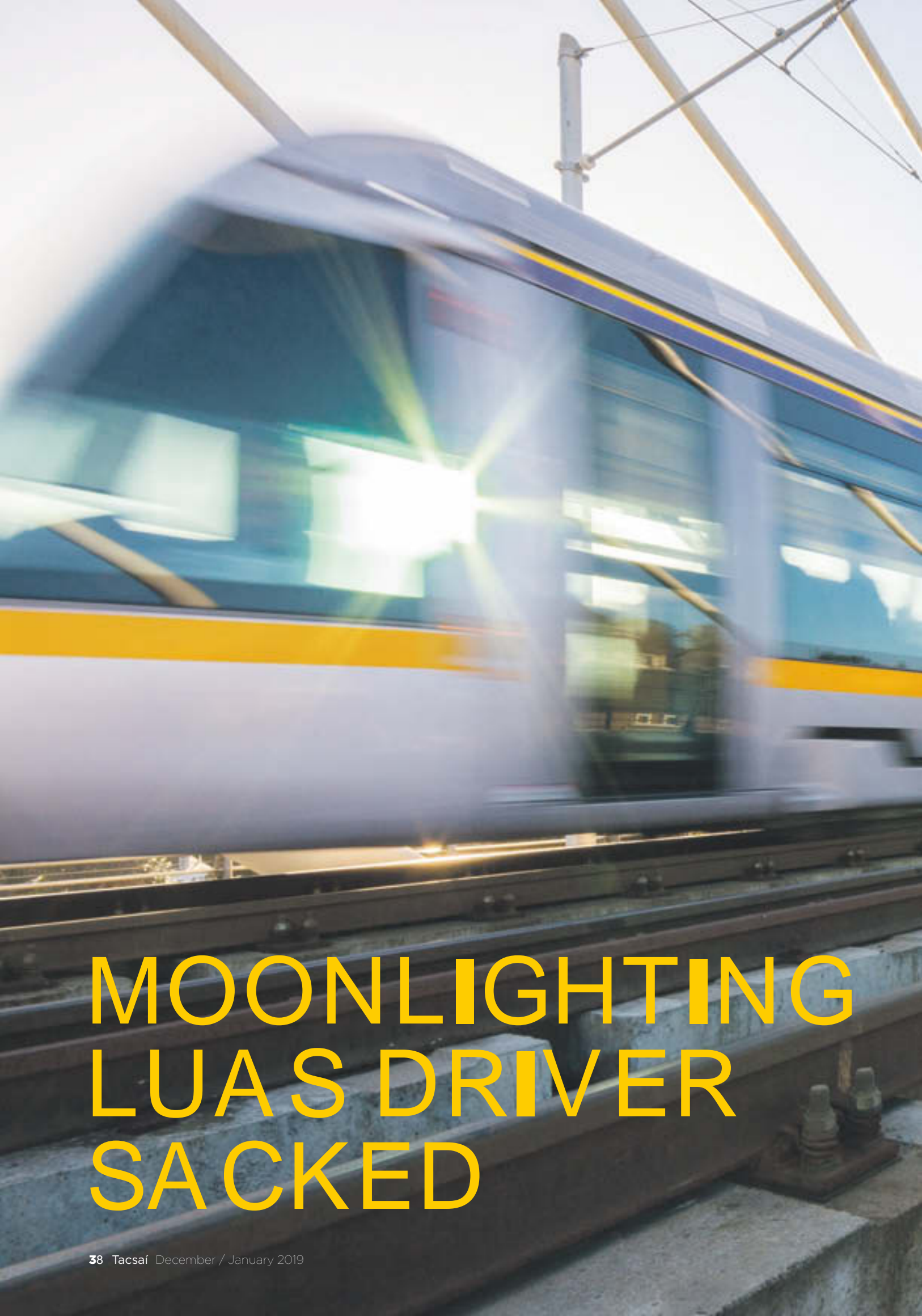
QUESTIONS

1. How many letters does the Greek alphabet contain?
2. Which English King removed the Stone of Scone from Scotland?
3. Which is the largest of the Greater Antilles islands?
4. Between which two planets would you find the Asteroid Belt?
5. Which songs with "Under" in the title were UK top ten hits for the following artists, [a] Eartha Kitt (1955), [b] Last Shadow Puppets (2008), [c] Sandie Shaw (1966), [d] Queen with David Bowie (1981) and [e] Funkadelic (1978)?
6. What is the occupation of a Biblioplist?
7. Who was President of the Confederate States of America from 1862 to 1865?
8. In the Thomas Hardy novel, what was the name of the Mayor of Casterbridge?
9. In which countries would you find the following wine growing regions, [a] Limari Valley, [b] Napa County, [c] Rheinhessen, [d] Chianti and [e] Cloudy Bay?
10. In the TV series, who was the pilot of Thunderbird 1?
11. From what original TV programme were the following "spin-offs", [a] "Softly Softly", [b] "Timmy Time", [c] "The Fenn Street Gang", [d] "The Green Green Grass" and [e] "NCIS"?
12. By what name was Benin known prior to 1975?
13. What is taught under the Delsarte System?
14. Which four US States start with the letter "A"?
15. What was actor Rex Harrison's birth name?

THE TAXI MAGAZINE CHRISTMAS QUIZ

16. Which Australian State capital lies on the Torrens River?
17. In surfing terms what is a skeg?
18. Who were the authors of the following Booker Prize winning books, [a] "Midnight's Children" (1981), [b] "The Sellout" (2016), [c] "The Inheritance of Loss" (2006), [d] "Heat and Dust" (1975) and [e] "Amsterdam" (1998)?
19. What is the stage name of singer Alecia Beth Moore?
20. Where might a fumerole be found?

- ANSWERS**
1. Twenty-Four.
 2. Edward I.
 3. Cuba.
 4. Mars & Jupiter.
 5. a] "Under the Bridges of Paris" reached no 7, [b] "The Age of the Under Statement", no 9, [c] "Message Understood", no 6, [d] "Under Pressure", no 1 and [e] "One Nation Under a Groove" no 9.
 6. Book binder.
 7. Jefferson Davis.
 8. Michael Henchard.
 9. a] Chile, [b] USA, [c] Germany, [d] Italy and [e] New Zealand.
 10. Scott Tracey.
 11. a] "Z-Cars", [b] "Shaun the Sheep", [c] "Please Sir!", [d] "Only Fools and Horses" and [e] "JAG".
 12. Dahomey.
 13. Drama & Dancing.
 14. Alabama, Alaska, Arizona and Arkansas.
 15. Reginald Carey.
 16. Adelaide.
 17. A fin on the bottom of a board.
 18. a] Salman Rushdie, [b] Paul Beatty, [c] Kiran Desai, [d] Ruth Praver Jhabvala and [e] Ian McEwan.
 19. Pink!
 20. On the side of a volcano.



MOONLIGHTING LUAS DRIVER SACKED



Luas operator, Transdev has sacked one of its drivers after finding that he was “moonlighting” as a taxi-driver in his wife’s licensed taxi.

In response to a tip-off over the driver’s “moonlighting”, Transdev hired a private investigator who placed the driver under surveillance over two evenings.

The private investigator observed the Luas employee accepting a number of fares and also hailed down the “taxi-driver” to become a passenger in his cab and paid a €5 fare.

After an internal investigation and disciplinary process, the Luas driver was sacked for gross misconduct after two internal appeals, including one to Transdev’s managing director, failed.

In dismissing the driver, Transdev found the “moonlighting” as gross misconduct as it viewed the additional demands placed on the driver’s time as a threat on his capacity to carry out his highly responsible role as Luas driver.

Transdev also pointed out that the driver’s contract of employment contains explicit exclusion of “moonlighting” work. The company stated that the decision to dismiss was a proportionate sanction in the circumstances.

In response the Luas driver sued for unfair dismissal and the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) has found that the dismissal was fair, upholding Transdev’s decision.

As part of the Transdev investigation, the driver said that he didn’t know how many times he had driven his wife’s taxi.

He said: “It was really ad hoc, so I would just help her out. No set criteria, no set anything.”

He said he did not collect any fares, and that these would be forwarded to his wife later.

The Luas driver didn’t accept that his conduct was a potential challenge to his capacity to discharge his duties with Transdev in a safe manner.

However, the “whistle-blower” in the case had stated that the Luas driver “arrived on a regular basis (Friday and Saturday) at the taxi base where he swaps from his private car and into his wife’s taxi and works til 2-3am”.

The un-named Luas driver told the WRC that the dismissal was not proportionate and the actions of Transdev were unreasonable.

On the “tip-off” received by Transdev, the driver claimed that the complaint was “malicious” and possibly written by another Luas employee to cause him damage.

The driver stated that the level of knowledge of his movements would not be known to a person who had simply casually observed them and that the person making the complaint was aware of detail about the wife’s taxi business and other details suggesting that this was someone who knew the driver well and set out to cause him harm.

WRC Adjudication Officer, Pat Brady said that the manner in which the matter came to the employer’s attention “is suspicious indeed”.

Mr Brady said: “Ultimately, this does not matter. The respondent has a duty to apply its own rules once any alleged breach of them comes to its attention and regardless of the motives of any person doing so.”

The driver can appeal the decision to the Labour Court. Transdev on Monday declined to comment on the WRC ruling.

PROTEST OVER RIDE-SHARING SERVICE

MyTaxi drivers gathered outside the company's headquarters recently to protest a new "cab-sharing" feature that has been labelled "dangerous" by drivers. By Keith Bellew

The taxi company, which rebranded from Hailo early last year, has been toying with a cab-sharing feature for over a year - but the company is now close to launching the service.

The service would enable users to share a journey with another user going in the same direction, slashing the cost of their fare and also meaning there would be more taxis available in the city centre during busy periods.

As well as meaning less fares for drivers, many MyTaxi drivers reckon the introduction would be dangerous for passengers.

Jim Waldron from the National Private Hire and Taxi Association said:

"The taxi driver you get in with is a stranger, but they have been vetted by the police.

"The person you invite into the taxi beside you... it only has to go wrong once".

The cab sharing feature is similar to UberPOOL - which is already popular in a number of cities including London and New York.

Last year when the plans were announced, Newstalk's tech correspondent Jess Kelly said the service will only use fully licensed taxi drivers:

"It is going to be fully regulated," she said. "All the drivers are going to be licensed drivers."

"But the concept is if three people on Friday night are looking for a taxi and they are going the same direction; they can share or split the fare and try and reduce the pressure and the demand on taxi drivers."

Tommy Barton of the Dublin Taxi Association has questioned the move saying:

"The Mytaxi app has decided to roll out a pilot/trial scheme of what only can be described as "Ride Share"

They propose to call it "Taxi Hub".

It aims to "pair" strangers on a route basis and allow them to share your taxi!

This not only dissolves the available work by at least 50% but raises other issues too!

1. you will be unable to provide two separate printed receipts as is currently required by the NTA.

This is because mytaxi has requested that the meter be run until the end of the fare. This puts drivers outside of the law under current rules.

2. Strangers traveling together pose a security risk as in such instances conflict is more likely."

He went on to say:

"This platform MyTaxi intends to introduce into Ireland is already being used in Spain and Poland. The Dublin Taxi Association has serious reservations and safety concerns for both passenger and taxi driver."

He went on to raise a number of questions:

1. Which passenger is legally responsible for hiring the vehicle
2. Which passenger pays for the €2 Euro pick up.
3. Does the end-user of the journey get the cheapest fare.
4. Under the taxi regulation the onus is on the taxi driver to give a valid receipt at the end of the journey.

He said Mytaxi's current plan is to roll out this part of the app this Friday 23rd from 10PM to 01:00AM from Drury Street car park.

"This cannot be allowed happen. should stand together on this issue and not allow a greedy multinational to effectively lower (at least) available work by 50% Taxi drivers should support each other and not allow this new departure to put more pressure on what is already a highly competitive industry. An increase in taxi traffic from 10:15PM to 01:00AM surrounding the Drury street area to prevent this ludicrous suggestion gaining ground would send out a clear message," he said.

He called on all drivers to fight for their livelihood by standing together to prevent "greedy" multinationals from further diluting the industry.

"I would also like to add that the NTA had a meeting on Friday, November 30 for over 4 hours and enforcement officers were present at this meeting in relation to mytaxi hub. The national Transport Authority have been in touch with their legal team and in due course my taxi will be informed of the legalities by the NTA," he said.

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WORLD NEWS

TOP STORIES FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

AUSTRALIA

A bitter, bizarre and increasingly heated Outback Northern Territory taxi cab rivalry is threatening the sanctuary of an otherwise tranquil town.

Key points:

- Kais Al Selawi was beaten outside his own home by four masked men with planks
- Family says they fear for their lives after attack, and are considering leaving NT
- Criminals remain on the run; investigation upgraded and given to Organised Crime Division

Two warring Nhulunbuy taxi companies have been hurling allegations at each other, from accusations of violent threats to petty insults about religion, with neither team willing to abate or forge peace.

And as the NT's Drug and Organised Crime Division moves in to investigate an unsolved crime, the rift is only muddying the waters, making it harder for detectives to discover the truth of what really happened in the brutal beating of cab driver Kais Al Selawi.

Mr Al Selawi grew up in war-torn Iraq, living under the oppressive regime of dictator Saddam Hussein.

But he says he felt safer then as a young man than he does now as a married father of three in the East Arnhem Land town of Nhulunbuy.

Here, he and his family fear for their lives daily.

Mr Al Selawi was beaten on the porch of his own home earlier this month — attacked by four masked men with planks and a “bush knife” as his wife and children stood screaming, looking helplessly on.

Now, still sporting body wounds and an injured hand, he is growing ever more fearful of a reprisal.

He believes his attackers had aimed to take his life and would return to finish the job.

CANADA

A Yellowknife taxi driver, mourning the death of a co-worker this week, says the city must do more to protect drivers.

Nur Ali, who works for City Cab, says Yellowknife city council should change its bylaws to make it easier for taxi drivers to escape dangerous situations.

Specifically, Ali wants drivers to be exempt from having to wear a seatbelt.

“Someone sitting in a back seat, they can trap me [with] the seatbelt, they can choke me [with] the seatbelt,” he said Wednesday.

“That’s not safe.”

Issues surrounding cab drivers’ safety were thrust into the spotlight this week, after Ahmed Mahamud Ali was found unconscious in the back seat of the City Cab taxi he had been driving. He was pronounced dead in hospital.

Two men have been charged with murder in connection with his death. They are scheduled to appear in court soon.

Nur Ali said he has driven taxis in Toronto and Los Angeles, and drivers in both cities can unbuckle their seatbelts when they feel they are at risk.

Cab drivers in Ontario don’t have to wear a seatbelt while transporting a fare, but they must buckle up while driving alone. In Vancouver, taxi drivers can ride unbuckled at speeds under 70 km/h.

City Cab general manager Shirley McGrath said in Yellowknife, taxi drivers are required to wear seatbelts while driving.

Yellowknife Mayor Rebecca Alty says she has not yet had the chance to talk to taxi drivers, who are issued chauffeur’s permits by the city.

“In regards to changing the bylaws for chauffeurs, that would be something we’d have to do with drivers,” she said.

Nega Haile, president of Unifor Local 1688, which represents taxi drivers in Ottawa, recommends that drivers wear seatbelts. However, he understands why they may choose not to do so.

“At night, if you get into a kind of argument, you don’t feel comfortable ... so you have to prepare yourself ... prepare to run away from the car,” he said.

In Ottawa, said Haile, taxis have cameras, GPS and a hidden panic button near the driver’s seat. When a driver hits the panic button, it sends a danger signal to the dispatcher, who can then call police and alert other taxis on the road.

“We always recommend to have those — camera, panic button, GPS in the car — installed,” he said.

Ali said taxi drivers in Yellowknife can send an emergency signal to dispatch through the tablets installed in their vehicles, but some drivers are not aware of this capability.

Driving a cab is a dangerous job, said Ali.

“I had someone punch me on my eye and my eye was red [for] like a week,” he said.

“I take a picture of myself and I show my kids and they start to cry when they saw that.”

Below right: Cab driver Kais Al Selawi, his wife Sfaa Al Khafaji and their eldest daughter Hiba Selawi fear for their safety in Nhulunbuy. Below left: Kais Al Selawi was hospitalised after the brutal beating outside his Nhulunbuy home.



Ali is not the first taxi driver to say he has been punched while working. Another City Cab driver, Abdullah Ali, told CBC News that getting assaulted on the job is not out of the ordinary.

According to Statistics Canada data from 1997 to 2017, an average of 13 people die by homicide on the job each year.

Over this time period, taxi, truck and bus drivers comprised 15 per cent of work-related homicides. They closely followed police and correctional officers and security guards, who accounted for 19 per cent of homicides on the job.

"A taxi driver is not safe, in a sense, because he can be called at any place, by anybody with intentions which are not good, and he's alone," said Mohan Kang, president of the B.C. Taxi Association.

For this reason, said Kang, taxis in Metro Vancouver, the Victoria region and other B.C. communities are equipped with cameras.

Cameras won't protect drivers in the moment of an attack, said Kang, but they can act as a deterrent to potential assailants.

"They know that someone is watching — that is the fear that they have, which is, in fact, correct," he said.

Cameras have also made it easier to secure convictions for customers who have assaulted drivers, Kang said.

City Cab drivers have the option of installing cameras in their vehicles at their own cost, said McGrath. All of the company's drivers are independent contractors, and each of the 82 vehicles is owned by a driver.

City Cab meters used to have panic buttons, but those went away when the company switched to new meters. It does not have a policy or specific protocols in place for how drivers should handle violent situations.

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of Northwest Territories and Nunavut says it has received two medical reports from taxi drivers so far this year, but because neither driver had personal optional coverage, their claims were not accepted.

The commission encourages all workers to report workplace violence.

They can do so anonymously online or by phone.

Ali, the City Cab driver, said he used to tell visitors that people in Yellowknife are nice and the city is safe.

"What to say now?" he said.

"The city has to do something."

FRANCE

The Thai couple's dispute with the driver went viral when a video of the incident was posted to YouTube on 9 November.

Chakrid Thanachartyothin and his wife wanted to take a taxi from Charles de Gaulle airport to their hotel in central Paris, which typically costs €45-55 (£39-£48).

But the 25-year-old driver - named as Enock C - aggressively insisted on a payment of €247 (£219).

When the couple refused to pay the amount, the driver locked them inside the car and refused to let them out.

At a Paris court, he was found guilty of fraud and extortion involving threats and jailed for eight months, French media reported.

According to reports, the driver said he worked for a private taxi service - known as VTC in French - called Chauffeur Prive.

In the video, he becomes angry when the tourists offer him €180 (£159).

"You pay me 200 Euro! Pay me, pay me," he shouts.

The couple demand to be let out and later accuse the driver of hitting Mr Chakrid in the face.

They paid Enock after becoming desperate to get out of the vehicle.

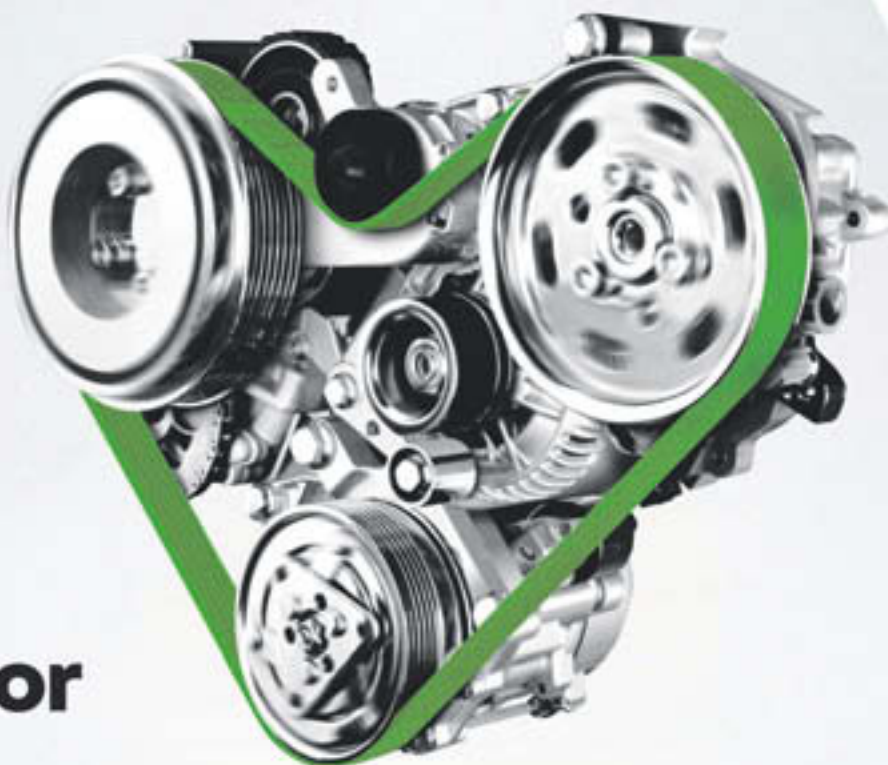
In an update on 10 November, Mr Chakrid wrote on his YouTube channel: "We are now back to Bangkok.

"One of our friend in Paris went to the police station for us today to report the case."

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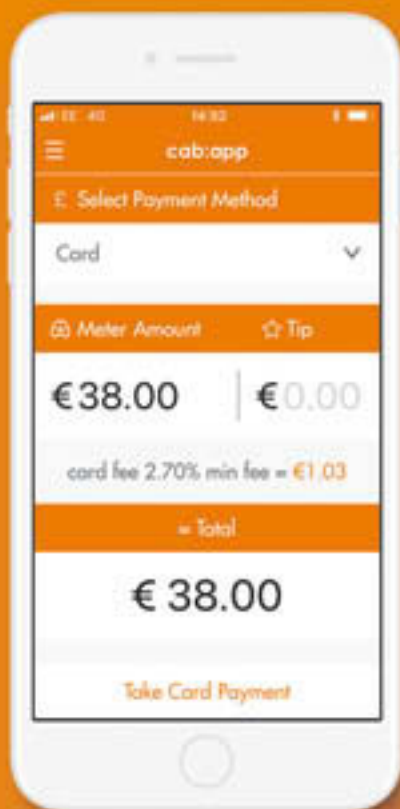
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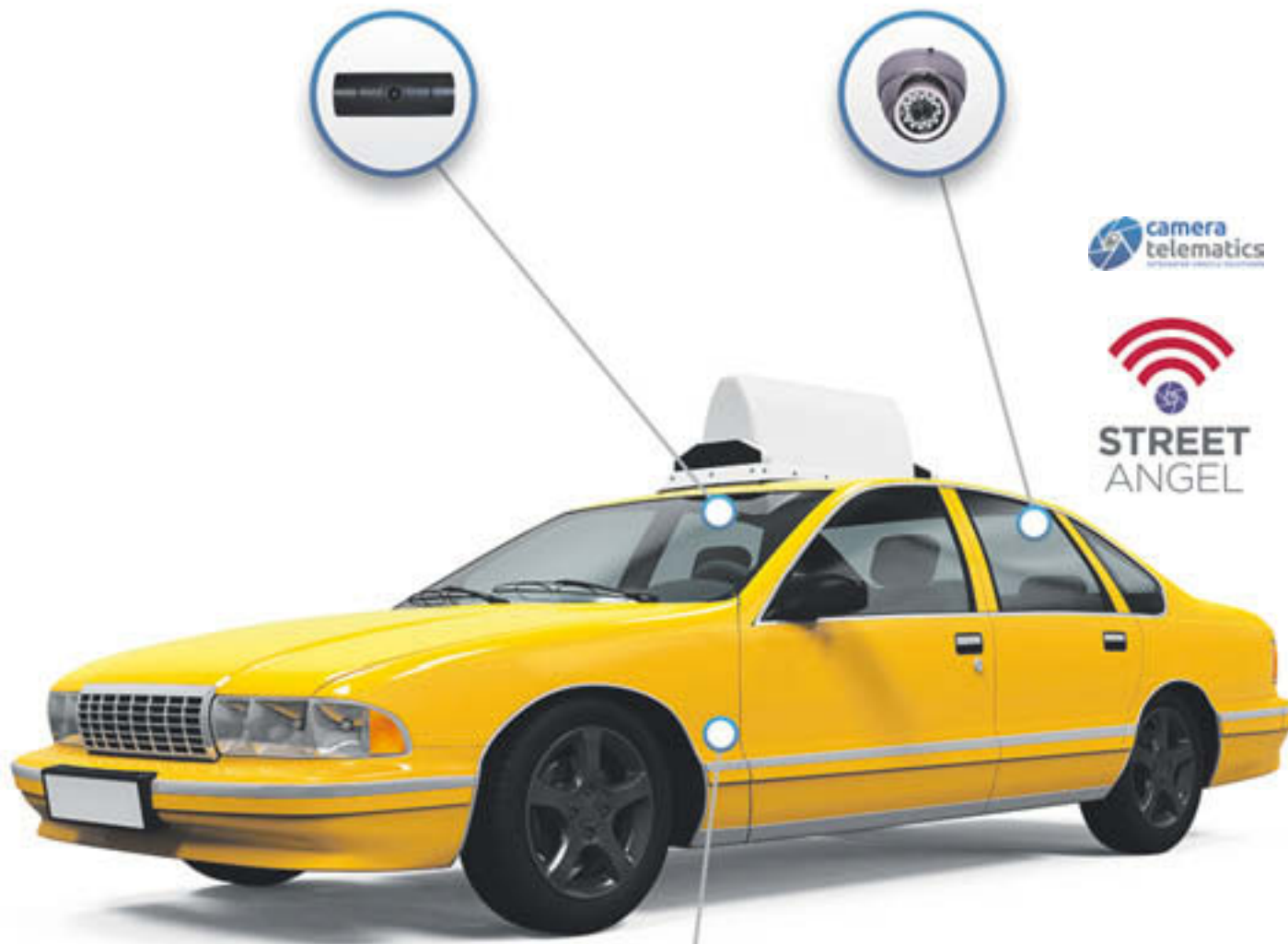
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THE PUBLIC
TRANSPORT
ESTABLISHMENT
IN IRELAND
- BANISHING
PRIVATE HIRE
AND ABUSING
THE S.P.S.V'S
DRIVERS
PRACTICE.**

By Derry Coughlan of the Cork Taximens' Association.



Transport for Ireland, in its "Preliminary Report" under the Review Heading of Draft SPSV RESEARCH, dated 26th July 2018 in conjunction with NTA Administration and Advisory Committee came up with the following Policy Areas - : 1) Vehicle Licence Categories, 2) WheelChair Accessible Licences, 3) Vehicle Standards & Requirements, 4) Dynamic pricing for "peak times" volume, 5) Credit and Debit Card Payments, 6) Taxi Vehicle Identification, 7) Local Area Hackneys, 8) Transferability of Vehicle Licences, 9) New Penalty Offences adjusted, 10) Technology Developments, 11) Autonomous (Driverless) Vehicles, 12) Zero Emission Vehicles and 13) Colour Uniformity of Taxis. As you are aware, I am always harping on about retaining and revising the regulatory framework for TAXIS and their "hiring sites," which requires high standards for both the vehicle categories and their individual drivers, must be licenced in segregation, with drivers operational conditions and intending passenger's legal responsibilities. The LIMOUSINE CAR HIRE must be promoted as it is in a status demand, the HACKNEY CAR private hire must be retained in one category only- This is all about Community Transport – It should be licenced by each District Council or Garda Public Carriage Office available in the Republic of Ireland. This rural market needs a liberalized approach in necessity with a liberality motor insurance scheme. Therefore, taxis are not in the Demographic and Social aspect of Rural Ireland - conclusion is that the so-called National Taximeter Area must be revoked and a return to Traditional Town and City Taximeter Areas, retaining the taxis "private hire" arrangements outside the METER recording Areas, as taxis are only Street Service Vehicles for Public Hire, their extension function must get "private hire for Long Distance Journeys and the legal coverage to operate all TELEPHONIC, SWITCHBOARD and MOBILE APP HIRINGS. These were the "old rules" covered in the Small Public Service Vehicle Regulations in the Road Traffic Act.

We do not want, Taxi Regulation Department or Transport Authority Department misguidance but firm quality licensing road transport with legal duties for drivers and passengers and guidelines for your District Council Bye-Laws! All scheduled in the S.P.S.V. Regulations of the ROAD TRAFFIC ACT. At present,

we have "business interest" prosecuting drivers but they can't prosecute passengers, so there lies my case?

Transferability of a TAXI LICENCE should be dealt by the National Transport Authority – suggestion on humanitarian grounds, New License Charge to an individual (never a company) should be €8,000 and on surrender receives €5,000 in return. (This scheme could be introduced for the existing operators who prefer to retire, rather than "will" it to another person!). This license is re-issued in the same taximeter area again for €8,000 and so on! It would solve a lot of problems and upkeep a better volume service to the public.

PEAK TIMES FARE BANDS...

...would ruin our market place, as the meter waiting time price recording does at present, road and street congestion and access routes impairs the performance of public transport generally. It can retard the economy, disrupt social life, and harm the physical environment. However, we in Cork City have overcome this problem with extra BUS CORRIDORS and at certain times main exiting street closures, with BUS EIREANN and TAXIS only allowed to perform, YES it works.

TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS

1) Instant Hiring of a Taxi, if available in area, chance waiting, responding to a mobile phone App, not able to perform certain duties etc.

2) Autonomous (driverless) vehicles, dreaming to provide some type of a taxi service.

3) Zero emission vehicles, not sure whether the grants are going to continue in this field. After the year 2030 it is proposed that all cars and vans will be zero emission –capable, but what about the Haulage trucks and the Aeroplanes in the sky! Please understand that a driverless vehicle is not a TAXI, but comes under the CAR HIRE / CAR RENTAL regime, which already has been banned! Fully Electric Powered Vehicles are already causing serious problems – Owners with only street parking are Re-Charging these

vehicles out their hall-doors with cable and cone notice – totally illegal and unsafe for public walkers.

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE TAXI VEHICLES

The important issue here is the instant availability. May I suggest that the Department has its own APP with all the drivers nationwide on it, for the benefit of wheelchair passengers and a reward for the drivers by way of FUEL VOUCHERS arranged by the Department and the Petrol Stations again nationwide.

TAXI ROOF LIGHT SIGN

Everyone agrees that the original taxi-roof sign specification should be retained as outlined in S.I. No. 139 of 1987, which replaced the Trade Signs and Vehicle Plate Licences at that time. These regulations provide for the format and display of a “roof light sign” (to be called a taxi sign) on all public hire vehicles operating in Taximeter areas after the 8th June 1987. The sign shall be capable of being lit by means of an internal electric light installation and the sign when lit shall not show a “red light face” to the front or a “white light face” to the rear. This present sign which attracts great attention has a yellow base front and rear panels of not more than 120 millimetres high. The overall height of the sign is 110 Millimetres and 1,100 Millimetres maximum length.

The sign is divided into three equal sections for,

- 1) Licence Details,
- 2) The word **Taxi**
- 3) Hiring, Sales, Contacts, etc.

The Taxi regulation review Group, are obviously after looking at Large Cities in Europe with their range of taxi signs, but you must remember that most of those taxis only provide services in city zones, while in the Republic of Ireland, taxi work extends

beyond the “city bounds”. Our identification and recognition type and size of “roof- sign” must be for notice in urban centres, inner urban, suburban, semi-rural or rural areas, whether in townscape or landscape requires the present Taxi Sign display at all times! In this Country, you need the FULL WIDTH OF ROOF SIGNAGE for intending passenger observation and hirers will always look for the information on Roof Signs for trust and confidence. Only one design of taxi sign should be permitted, with the supply controlled by the National Transport Authority through one appointed supplier on fixed costs, etc. These procedures will safeguard the service provider and customer alike. This established TAXI SIGN must be retained but most taxi operators need to replace their sign with the new conventional issue that is available – one specification and one position on the taxi vehicle roof, bringing uniformity for public place business trade! This taxi-sign should not be removed from your S.P.S.V. Taxi because it shows the vehicle licence number and area of operation for public inspection – some of the Great Britain taximeter areas have the “Vehicle Licence Plate” with details fixed to both sides of the Roof Sign and is replaced yearly on licence renewal - unlike our method which is a “Mini-Cab” (Window Stickers), version copied from the U.K. We should all unite and upgrade our Taxi Business Signs, the one specification available at SIGNS CONNECT IRELAND (Telephone 01-8427255) for €172.00 collected or delivered anywhere in the Republic of Ireland for €187.00 (Including V.A.T).

REVIEW OF FIXED PAYMENT OFFENCES

Some penalties have been increased substantially and they state that these should reflect a desire to influence the behaviour of S.P.S.V. Operators in how a vehicle is operated.

Again I state we are concerned about the lack of manual rules of vehicle operation and Driver duties, plus your local Bye-Laws

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and Transport Terminal conditions, all should be issued with both of your licences required. These penalties cover Consumer Protection matters and Public Safety, but again where are these offences – assaults, vehicle damage, bilking and fare disputes, fare amount shortage, wrong delivery directions, delaying a pre-hired taxi, and detours for Bank Link machines (sometimes Credit Card doesn't function), passengers being drunk and falling asleep, delaying the taxi-driver. But one issue we must address ourselves is the REFUSAL to carry those travelling a short journey, etc.

CREDIT & DEBIT CARD PAYMENTS

Fees for the use of cards - You are not allowed put a surcharge for passengers who supply a Credit or Debit card for taxi fare payment. The only exception is American Express/Diners Club cards and business/corporate credit cards, which carry a process, cost incorporated in the payment. However to make these transactions attractive in our TAXI BUSINESS, under the E.U. Ruling, you are allowed "Charges for Additional Services." This means in our Superior Legislation the FARE being a statutory payment recorded, we are permitted to charge a fee for processing equipment used for the benefit of the hirer. Therefore, we must apply to our Licensing Authority for a TWO-EURO service charge on all Credit Card Transactions. This is the Law, similar to the delivery, travel insurance, package, and storage of goods applicable on all Credit Cards. These terms of payment must be displayed in your taxi and fare payment receipts must show the "equipment surcharge" amount separately, as you must give notice of any additional payment requested. The National Transport Authority state that all taxis should be legally required to provide consumers with an approved card payment facility at point of fare payment, this should be introduced following the next fare review. So let us go about our business now and seek the "TWO EURO" surcharge, which will encourage the goodwill of our Business.

LOCAL AREA HACKNEYS

This new version of a Private Hire Licence has failed, but what should be encouraged in the Rural Transport area, is a MINI-CAB Licence incorporating Driver and Vehicles in the one licence, set, with three year span and all Private Hire and Limousine Vehicles should go down this road. Taxi and Private Hire must be segregated. This would be a big development in "Community Transport" and Corporate Transport. The proposed new licensing system would make entry more attractive and there is a badly needed market there to be developed and promoted. The word "hackney" should never have been used in Ireland – London Taxis are known of old, because of their horse drawn predecessors, sometimes referred to "Hackney Carriage," and early example of economic regulation in road passenger transport. The word "HACKNEY" has been passed down through the centuries and is derived from the Flemish term "Haquene" meaning ambling nag, a dappled grey horse that came originally from Flanders. It has nothing to do with the London Borough of that name.

VEHICLE STANDARDS

Discussed in this report are all S.P.S.V age limits, Vehicle Capacity & Size, Tinted Windows, Vehicle Taxi Identification and the Colour Uniformity of Taxis, etc. Standard Taxis can operate up to 10th Anniversary of first registration and Wheelchair Taxis can operate up to 15th Anniversary of first registration. Vehicle size there is no change and Tinted Windows given the safety objective of this standard, no change is proposed. Identification at present retained, Roof Sign. Door Decals, Window Licences, and Drivers Licence Details displayed. Taxi Fleet Colour Uniformity was shelved due to the large costs arising from such a change and after sales problems. In the Vehicle Licensing Area, it was recommended as they say, technology is narrowing the difference between Taxis and Hackneys, and therefore all existing Hackneys should be converted to Taxis with compensation for costs (RUBBISH, but look who is going to take over!)

THIS REPORT makes no reference to the serious issues in our TAXI BUSINESS such as revised laws to protect our TAXI OFFICE BASES. These have a similar role to our transport terminals and must be protected if you want a guaranteed collection and delivery transport in our country – digital hiring has failed in many respects in this area of transport provision, etc. TAXI RANKS - construction has totally been neglected even though they commissioned consultants for revision and update advice in this area. We need in our Cities and Towns conspicuous permanent ranks and occasional night ranks – proper signage – no parking – safety handrail screens – road markings- passenger notices – specification and rules for drivers – enforcement of the Parking regulations and your local Bye-Laws issued by your District Council.

TAXI-DRIVER ADVICE

which is needed nowadays with the younger generation 'coming on stream' – BUSINESS DISPLAY (Vehicle) and BEHAVIOUR (Taxi-Driver). OPERATIONAL MATTERS must be circulated. CONSUMER PROTECTION MATTERS must be addressed. We must have PUBLIC SAFETY in the system also, but the passengers must conform also and obey/respect the taxi-driver. As Licenced State Public Servants, I just wonder where are they taking us to and what's going to happen. Will we be treated like the Road Hauliers, Publicans, Dance Hall owners and OFF LICENCES and many more that got NO LICENCE PROTECTION over the years!

SUPERIOR LEGISLATION...

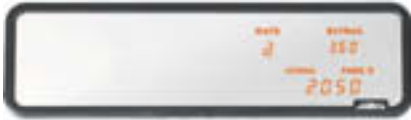
...must be retained for state sub-contractors providing transport in assigned public places and travel terminals. You could lose your licence, because there are an extreme amount of laws in your workplace, targeted by An Garda Síochána and the N.T.A to prosecute a matter through the courts. The original taxi methods will have to return, confirmation of the Bye-Laws at Transport terminals, Taxi Ranks and Booking Offices for operational controls and safeguards. The Taxi-Drivers must be informed, guidance rules and protection in the workplace, before any enforcement is considered, this is the way it works in progressive and well-established Cities throughout the world. This business of "Setting-Up" the industry for some other encroachment interest must be stopped. Obviously our representatives don't understand what is legally required!

NEWSFLASH

FLYING TAXIS could take to the skies within the next 12 months, the boss of Aircraft giant BOEING reckons. The US firm's CEO Dennis Muilenburg said he is working with UBER to build prototypes, he expects to see flying cars "within the coming years," and self-flying cars, dubbed eVTOLs, maybe operational by 2023, followed by three-dimensional highways like those seen in futuristic films. TAXI F-AIR?

NATIONAL PROTEST AND OBJECTION

Urgent removal of Road Ramps is sought, as frequent road users and loaded "low level" vehicles, are being seriously damaged by these unnecessary variation of road ramps on public roads, hotel grounds, housing and industrial estates throughout our country. These ramps are not part of natural road or street design; serve no purpose, stupid people interfering with the well-being of motorists, taxis, buses ambulances, wheelchair wagons and other transport service providers – enough is enough. Please just get them removed! It is a serious developing problem with our new range of vehicles and even motorcycles. Our District Councils would want to "wake up" and take corrective action straight away, as the Law Courts have already given judgement in one "personal injuries" claim by a private motorist, and there are more "claims" pending. So, you see, what the "smart-alecks" have walked themselves into! Not alone are we looking for revised motor and public transport regulations, but where are the "Irish Standard Specifications" for Roads, Motorways, Car Parks and Busways, etc., gone to.



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