

Tabled by Mr Langbroek MP
At Estimates CSSS hearing
Date 4/8/22 at 1.10 pm
Signature Lynda Hutton

Surfers Paradise Electorate Office

From:
Sent: Monday, 4 July 2022 6:58 PM
To: Surfers Paradise Electorate Office
Subject: Taxi Disservice for the Disabled

Dear Mr Langbroek,

My son, [redacted] is a paraplegic and is wheelchair bound. He is reliant on the disabled taxi services when he needs to go out.

At the present time, he is finding that the wheelchair taxi drivers are derelict in their duties to transport him. He always books a taxi in advance of when he requires it. He tries to give the company at least 2 or 3 hours notice of when he needs to be collected, however we are finding that he regularly waits around 2 hours after his specified pick-up time, for a cab to arrive.

In the interim while he is waiting, he phones the taxi company and asks why his booking has been disregarded. He is told that there is nothing that the company can do to force the wheelchair taxi drivers to take the booking. Sometimes a driver will accept the booking but then fail to present at the pick-up address and then decline the job an hour or so later, presumably because they have a more lucrative fare.

You may be thinking that perhaps [redacted] is an undesirable character who has abused the drivers or done something to make the drivers avoid collecting him. However I can assure you that [redacted] is an exceedingly polite man and it is his disability that is causing him to present undesirably. One taxi driver who recently arrived to pick [redacted] up after his booking had been discarded by another driver, told [redacted] that it is because the drivers are too lazy to put him in the taxi and strap his wheelchair down. The man said that although the drivers of the wheelchair taxis are paid more for performing this service, they frequently brag to each other that they avoid taking the disabled clients because they refuse to do the extra work. He said that one driver had recently bragged to him that he has been driving the wheelchair taxi for over 2 months and has never collected a disabled fare.

[redacted] also has an Intellectual Impairment and I worry that he could very easily become a victim of theft or abuse while he is waiting to be collected in public places. Thankfully, he usually has one of his young Carers with him, which reassures me that he is safe, but this too can present another issue. They are sometimes forced to continue waiting for the taxi with [redacted] long past the time when they are supposed to clock-off and go about their own business. Their lives are then also thrown into disarray and financial compensation has to be sought for the additional hours that they have worked.

I'm not sure what the solution is; perhaps the wheelchair taxi drivers should be allocated a quota of disabled fares that they are required to collect each week. Perhaps we simply need more taxis on the road. I'm hoping Mr Langbroek, that this might be an issue that you could debate in Parliament, in order to resolve this problem that our disabled citizens are currently experiencing. Their right to access the community should not be made even more difficult than their physical impairments dictate, and their right to personal safety should not be compromised.

Please contact me should you need any further information.

Regards,