

Do better by our knights of the road

**Paul
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There is a reason it is hard to find a taxi in Sydney's CBD – it's just too bloody hard for cabbies and their equally frustrated passengers.

Ask any cab driver who'll tell you it's just about impossible for point-to-point drivers to legally pick up and set down passengers in our city's beating heart.

Plus there is always a regulator looking over their shoulder if they attempt, shock horror, to deliver passengers to where they want to go. In the desired postcode would be nice!

And the problem can only get worse as we move into the festive season with partygoers needing cabs to get to and from venues.

Unfortunately, for many cabbies, coming into the city just isn't worth all the hassle.

Business Sydney analysis shows the inconvenience factor

surrounding taxi use has caused a \$30m hit to the CBD economy through lost opportunity.

The analysis of IPART reports in 2012 and 2023 measures the impact of the inconvenience factor. In the 2012 report, 47% of cab users took taxis because it was the most convenient mode of transport for their needs. In the 2023 report, "convenience" had dropped sharply to just 27%.

Making it more difficult for taxis to access the city and for passengers to hail cabs in CBD streets has contributed to this negative impact.

The NSW Taxi Council supported by Business Sydney made a strong case for changes to make cab use more convenient.

Instead, the post-review announcement from Transport Minister Jo Haylen showed a preoccupation with sanctions for so-called "rogue" taxi drivers who, in reality, represent a tiny

fraction of operators.

There was little mention of operational efficiencies which were limited to extending taxi stands near the State Theatre and Theatre Royal Sydney and a flashing light to draw attention to the rank near the Fullerton Hotel. Plus the vague promise that some "no stopping" signs might in future give taxis a one minute exemption to pick up and drop passengers.

Being a highly regulated industry, taxi operators depend on the government and councils to make changes to benefit their customers. The industry can't independently enact measures that they know would help. The industry also needs to get the message out that cabbies, by and large, are the knights of the road.

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