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Cabbies deserve to be hailed

Paul Nicolaou



As head of the taxi industry, Nick Abraham has one of the toughest jobs in Sydney.

A former taxi driver, he has embraced the herculean task of reforming the taxi industry.

So, it's fortunate Nick is patient, persistent and committed to lifting standards of service, reliability and safety.

And if that means publicly castigating drivers who do the wrong thing, then so be it.

As far as Nick is concerned, rogue drivers just make life difficult for the many doing the right thing.

We know Nick has a tough job because the NSW Taxi Council – the organisation he leads – is a member of Business Sydney.

The industry's reputation is again under fire because of the fare-gouging behaviour of some cabbies at Sydney Airport.

Following the lead of international cities, mandating a set fare for airport cab rides is the most likely option for Transport Minister John Graham.

In the meantime, Nick Abraham should be given a chance to continue his industry reform agenda.

His council's introduction of the Taxi Driver Ambassador program is a good start.

The scheme identifies cabbies who want to give their passengers a fair go and fare certainty.

The ambassador program is not only an excellent initiative for the industry but also good for our city's reputation with visitors.

In another initiative, many cabbies now carry copies of the Sydney Travel Guide to help visitors better enjoy their time in our wonderful city.

But for Nick, the ambassador program is the road to being a respected industry.

Importantly, it should help make passengers confident of having safe and reliable transport.

The program demonstrates that so many taxi drivers are competent professionals who are proud of their city and of providing excellent service.

Taxis operated by the ambassadors can be readily identified by a special "medallion" affixed to their cabs.

To become an ambassador, drivers must pass a comprehensive accreditation process recognising their experience, knowledge and positive customer service record.

Let's support our cabbies as great ambassadors for our city.

Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney