

P. Fletcher,
12th August, 2007

Miss Sarah Latham,
Pricewaterhouse Coopers,

Dear Miss Latham,

As a taxi owner / driver I have received both the Taxi Operator Survey and the Taxi Driver Survey forms, attached not completed. The reason I have declined to complete them is that I have serious reservations about the credibility of the survey because of some of the questions and the fact that a number of years ago Pricewaterhouse Coopers was engaged by the Taxi Industry Association to do an independent investigation and report on the taxi industry and that report was, I understood, given no credibility by the government because it didn't come up with information that suited them. It wasn't pursued because the cost of Pricewaterhouse Coopers backing up their report was considered prohibitive by the TIA, although I thought at the time that any business worth its salt would have stood up for its own credibility. Now, it seems, PWC are acceptable to the government; maybe because they are "paying the piper".

Some of the questions leave a bit to be desired, such as;

16 – Maintenance Provider; when associated with question

18 – Maintenance Labour Cost; As a licenced mechanic and LPG mechanic, operating my own single taxi I find it offensive that as "DIY" maintenance, cost per hour is "just my time". My time is very valuable to me and must be counted at a full dollar value as part of the business. My "just my time" is not there to subsidise passengers! It should be counted at full workshop rates, but it seems that university educated accountants don't think so.

35 – Insurance; Insurance cost is extremely variable due to bonus / malice systems of premium. As an owner only employing "good" drivers my costs are relatively low but this is sometimes at the expense of not covering shifts with "any driver". An average of costs is not a valid way of calculating costs, I believe.

38 – Annual cost of licence plate; one option, "c", No Annual Cost (plate is owned) ; is totally misleading. My plate is owned outright; nevertheless the forgone opportunity cost is about 6.5% of its value as my money is tied up in the "plate", not invested elsewhere providing a return.

I cannot be confident in the reasoning and outcome of this "survey". I am willing to discuss this at any time.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Fletcher