

TAXI DRIVERS LICENSING BILL 2013

Committee

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. The Deputy Chair of Committees (Hon Liz Behjat) in the chair; Hon Jim Chown (Parliamentary Secretary) in charge of the bill.

Clause 1: Short title —

Committee was interrupted after the clause had been partly considered.

Hon JIM CHOWN: It is now five past five and we have the requested list for Hon Adele Farina and I would like to make it available to the opposition and to anyone else who would like to have a copy.

The DEPUTY CHAIR: Is the parliamentary secretary tabling that document?

Hon JIM CHOWN: Yes, I am. It also includes a list of all the existing offences under the Taxi Regulations 1995.

[See paper 1037.]

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Can I just check with the parliamentary secretary that it is my random list that he has just tabled?

Hon JIM CHOWN: It is the member's random list, and the stated number of 45 is actually 42.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I will play for time for a moment, because I want to come back and ask the parliamentary secretary some specific questions about this clause. I was pursuing the question of how this information is currently collected. I am interested to know how it is currently collected because I want to get a sense of how the collection of this material will change. The point I was making to the parliamentary secretary is that although the Department of Transport reported in 2010–11 that 460 taxi-related complaints had been lodged, none related to poor English, none related to the wrong tariff and none related to the use of a mobile phone or other distraction. I am wondering how that information could be collated in such a way that half the categories come out as not registering any complaint against taxidriviers. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary could describe first of all how this information was collated and then talk to us about how it will be done differently.

Hon JIM CHOWN: Just on a point of clarification, is the member asking how all complaints are collated initially and then how those complaints are pursued or put into separate categories?

Hon SALLY TALBOT: This is why I was pursuing the question about the categories. If we just take that one year—2010–11—a total of 460 complaints were somehow lodged with the department. From what I understand from the information provided to other members in answer to similar questions, would it be correct to say that none of those complaints came from regional areas? I think the parliamentary secretary said earlier that there was no reporting from regional taxi companies.

Hon JIM CHOWN: If a complaint had been received by taxi operators in regional Western Australia, it would be one of the statistics.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: Is somebody in the Department of Transport monitoring a phone line? How do these complaints come in? I refer again to the 460 that were received in 2010–11.

Hon JIM CHOWN: These complaints would have been received by the department either by phone or email or, in regard to regional areas, by people going to or phoning a regional department office.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I draw a comparison with the breakdown of offences in the question that I am referring to, which is dated 1 November 2011, relating to the 2010–11 financial year. The eight categories that I have referred to are poor English, overcharging, wrong tariff, poor geographical knowledge, use of a mobile phone, inappropriate language and inappropriate behaviour. We will leave sexual assault out of it because the answer provided makes it quite clear that that does not come under the same system. Clearly, those are quite different in substance to some of the offences on this list that the parliamentary secretary has now provided. The offences on the list that he has just tabled are things like failure to comply with notice or rectify defect and failure to return a driver bond within 14 days of the driver ceasing to be contracted, engaged or employed. They are not the sorts of complaints that a passenger is —

Hon Ken Travers: They are also not complaints against the driver. Some of these complaints are against the plates and passengers in fact.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I think we are confusing two categories of complaints here. I was particularly interested in complaints like poor English, overcharging et cetera, which will be lodged by the consumers of the taxi service—the passengers.

Hon JIM CHOWN: The member has a consolidated list of all offences—some are driver offences and some are operator offences.

Hon SALLY TALBOT: I can see that Hon Ken Travers is bursting to follow up on this, but I have one more question. When the person is logging these complaints from passengers, are these categories the ones that the department is currently working with—those eight or nine categories—or does it look like a master list, which is more like the document that the parliamentary secretary just tabled?

Hon JIM CHOWN: There is some confusion about the list that the member has.

Hon Sally Talbot: On your part or my part?

Hon JIM CHOWN: That list was provided in response to a question received earlier.

Progress reported and leave granted to sit again, on motion by Hon Jim Chown (Parliamentary Secretary).