

GLENROY

Cabbies fear for future

LICENCE PLAN TO 'RUIN' DRIVERS

Suzanne Robson and Madeline Healey

GLENROY cabbie Bruce Tootell says he and his fellow drivers face financial ruin if the State Government introduces open-market taxi licences.

The 63-year-old, who has driven cabs since 1977, bought his taxi licence for \$302,000 in 2000.

But he fears for the future of his investment after an independent inquiry into the Victorian taxi industry recommended making metro licences available for \$20,000 a year for five years.

Mr Tootell said if the proposal was adopted, the market would be flooded with taxis and the extra competition and falling value of his licence could see him lose his home, cab and career.

"I'll lose roughly half a million dollars and it means I will have my house repossessed and it means I won't be able to pay any of my loans," Mr Tootell said.

Taxi Industry Shareholders Victoria treasurer

AT A GLANCE

■ **March 2011:** Premier Ted Baillieu announced an inquiry into the taxi and hire car industry.

■ **May 2012:** A draft report was released with 145 recommendations.

■ **July 13:** Public submissions on draft report close. A final report is expected this year. Details: taxiindustryinquiry.vic.gov.au

George Yannas said hundreds of other owner-drivers would face financial hardship if the plan went ahead.

But taxi inquiry chairman Prof Allan Fels said existing licences would continue to be a solid investment.

"Importantly, unlike the proposed new licences, they will continue to be able to be assigned so that a decent return and income will still be possible," Prof Fels said.

What should be done to improve the taxi industry? morelandleader.com.au



Glenroy cabbie Bruce Tootell, who has been driving taxis since 1977, fears he could lose everything if the State Government introduces open-market taxi licences.

Picture: RICHARD SERONG N02C0506

ONLINE

News, views & competitions



Win tickets

WORK from 900 artists will be on show at the Royal Exhibition Buildings in Carlton next month as part of the 13th biennial Melbourne Art Fair. Two double passes to the Vernissage, each valued at \$350 each, are up for grabs for two readers, while 24 runners-up will win double day entry passes valued at \$60 each. The show runs from August 1-5, with runners-up tickets valid for entry from August 2-5. To enter, go to morelandleader.com.au by 5pm, Wednesday, July 18.

School holidays

WINTER school holidays can be difficult – the weather is too cold and wet to be able to shoo the kids out of the house. Leader has assembled a guide to indoor, all-weather school holiday activities that won't break the bank. Check out our guide at morelandleader.com.au

fast lane

Desexing offer

FAWKNER Veterinary Hospital will offer reduced pet desexing rates in July. Dr Tony Meese said the offer, made during National Desexing Month, was aimed at helping "prevent the tragedy of unwanted pets".

Water awards

MORELAND businesses are invited to enter Yarra Valley Water's 2012 savewater! awards. Businesses may also be eligible for the Prime Minister's Water Wise Award. Entries close 5pm, Friday, July 20. Details: yvwm.com.au

HADFIELD

Men convicted, fined over suburban dog attack

Suzanne Robson

TWO men have been convicted and ordered to pay fines and costs of more than \$8000 following a dog attack in Hadfield.

A five-year-old girl was walking along Bond St with

her aunt and uncle on April 21 when she was attacked by an American bull terrier and later admitted to hospital for injuries to her ear, head, buttocks and back.

The dog's owner and his son, both from Hadfield, were convicted of charges

related to the incident during a hearing at the Broadmeadows Magistrates' Court on July 4.

The owner pleaded guilty to a charge of being the owner of a dog that caused serious injury and a charge of failing to register the dog.

He was convicted and fined \$3000 and was ordered to pay costs of \$1619.38.

His son pleaded guilty to a charge of being the person in apparent control of a dog that caused serious injury.

He was convicted and fined \$3000 and was ordered

to pay costs of \$1619.38.

Speaking after the court case, Moreland Mayor John Kavanagh said the council would "do everything within its powers to enforce legislation relating to dog attacks and other animal violations".

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