

Media Release



Government response to Fels welcome, but drivers remain exposed by poor insurance

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The State Government's response to the Fels taxi inquiry has been welcomed by the Federation of Community Legal Centres. However, the State community legal peak has warned that a significant number of drivers remain exposed due to current insurance arrangements that leave many facing financial ruin when they find they are not fully covered for accidents.

"The Government's support for better third-party insurance and indemnity for drivers will see drivers protected in future from accidents where there is property damage. Unfortunately, we have many drivers already at risk from accidents whose insurance does not cover them, leaving them at risk of losing their homes.

"All drivers need protection, and that means drivers who are currently exposed, not just those in the future," said Lucie O'Brien, Senior Policy Adviser with the Federation of Community Legal Centres, lead author of the Federation report, *In the driver's seat: Achieving justice for taxi drivers in Victoria*.

The Federation also welcomed the introduction of mandatory driver agreements to improve the working conditions of drivers, but said only an employment agreement would give drivers the rights that other workers take for granted.

"In its move to better-insured and better-paid drivers who can rely on improved driver agreements and fairer licence arrangements, the State Government's response offers welcome first steps towards major reform of Victoria's taxi industry.

"We look forward to working with the new Taxi Services Commission to ensure that these reforms are fully implemented, in the spirit of Professor Fels' inquiry. We agree with Premier Napthine that better conditions for drivers mean better services for customers," Ms O'Brien said.

In the driver's seat: Achieving justice for taxi drivers in Victoria is available here:

www.fclc.org.au/public_resource_details.php?resource_id=2237

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