

23/01/2019



shebah

#LadiesLetsRoll

## Victorian On Demand Workforce Enquiry

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2016 Premier Daniel Andrews announced that Shebah was a new ride-sharing service run by women for women.

Being lawful was crucial to me and to the drivers.

Our app was built in Melbourne and designed after meeting with many women across Victoria. I had signed up twice to be a driver with Uber but twice had been too scared to pick up drunk men.

I started my company by putting in what remained from the sale of my family home after a divorce and what I was able to get from a GoFundMe page. Turned out a lot of women in Australia felt like me.

1 in 3 Australian women has experienced physical violence and 1 in 5 has endured sexual violence according to most recent ABS data. This does not include street harassment. 1 in 3 young women aged 15 to 19 won't go out after dark because they're too scared (Right to the Night Report)

Safety is the reason we exist. It is the reason so many women do not currently participate fully in sport, recreation, employment and study. We had to be beyond reproach. We knew that everything we did at Shebah would be scrutinised.

Before it was legislated our drivers had to have health checks, and provide RWCs. Their cars could be any age- as we did not wish to impose unnecessary costs on women, however they had to be safe.

Drivers are entitled to a free thirty minute financial consultation to discuss how to set up their GST superannuation and discuss financial goals and how to work with several platforms if they choose.

Drivers keep 85% of their fares and can take advanced bookings only if they choose. This means they never have to leave their home to get a job if they don't wish to. A driver can travel with her child in her car if her passengers don't object. This gives her freedom and flexibility.

We waited for the green light to start operating in Victoria. As the founder of the company I was determined provide the best advice to women as drivers. I knew that many drivers did not get paid the GST. Shebah has always charged the GST.

I knew drivers were not insured adequately and there was no information about what cover was needed. At Shebah our drivers have to have public liability insurance. This is explained from the very first phone call that drivers have with us.

Our drivers also have Working With Children Checks and receive a comprehensive training manual. We are currently seeking funding to provide further support for the work we do in Family Violence and transporting children to and from foster care and courts.

We have phone service to speak to our drivers Monday to Friday 9-5 and 24hour contact with Team Leaders in all states and territories via our Messenger Service. These women contact me if any emergency service has been contacted. All incidents are recorded in our incident register. The emotional safety of our drivers is also very important to us. From the beginning we have armed our drivers with referral cards for passengers who disclose confronting information about self harm or violence.

All drivers have cards with numbers to Lifeline, 1800 Respect and PaNDA. We also give 1% of every fare to charities that support women and children and this enables our community to feel that we are driving for the changes we want to see in the world.

Our online community which stretches from Townsville to Perth is also considered an extension of our workplace, and we regularly discuss appropriate online conduct.

Businesses have been able to use our services to enable women to work longer and achieve many career goals. International students in regional areas feel very comforted by our service and their families in particular enjoy knowing that their daughters are safe.

Many young women are participating in swimming, rowing and working later.

Women are only 4% of cab drivers and fewer than 10% of Uber drivers. For women, girls, transgender and the queer community to travel without fear of harassment is very often remarked upon and has seen us nominated for several awards. We enshrine this in our code of conduct.

Passengers who abuse or threaten drivers are reported and removed from our platform.

When drivers are disciplined it is a serious process. A head of driver support must receive a complaint in writing and unless it is a criminal matter, a driver will be given a right of reply before any action is taken. If a driver sleeps through a pick up repeatedly, if a driver takes cash, if a driver is racist or abusive she cannot stay with the company. It is always a painful and difficult decision. But as a driver myself I value the culture of inclusiveness and cohesion.

On a recent survey we found 70% of our drivers had experienced sexual harassment and 64% had experienced sexual violence. The average age of our driver is 51. She is seeking casual flexible work that fits around her family and other priorities. Many of our drivers are carers for ageing parents and children with a disability. Some are returned soldiers. Some have been in senior banking roles or government and some have prolonged periods of poor health, making fulltime work impossible.

As the only company that carries car seats for children we are in high demand for women who have had caesarean births (50% of all births) and now 38% of our bookings are for children.

Women need safe, flexible work. There is no minimum number of trips our drivers have to complete.

Passengers need a reliable safe transport with an office you can call. Shebah is very aware of having two customers, drivers and passengers, and looking after both is vital. We currently have 120,000 passengers and 1,340 drivers. Shebah services CASA, Berry St, Marie Stopes, Satellite Foundation, Sex Workers, Vision Impaired women, DV Connect and many other not for profits.

We have been very eager to be part of the last mile solution for women and girls everywhere. We do not surge. We have peak and off peak rates and our prices are predictable in consideration of our passengers.

I am happy to discuss Shebah further 22<sup>nd</sup> of Feb.

George McEncroe

CEO & Founder Shebah