

25<sup>th</sup> September 2015

I write in support of The Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

I am the owner of Brisbane Maxi Taxis, a company that operates a fleet of 34 Maxi Taxis around the SE suburbs of Brisbane, mostly in Wynnum, Manly and the Redlands. Our company has also recently made a significant investment in a large workshop facility at Mansfield, servicing over 200 of the Brisbane Maxi Taxi fleet. Both of these businesses provide employment for well over 60 Queenslanders. The incursion into the market of Uber threatens the livelihood of all of these people and the flow on effects will be dramatic and substantial in the wider community.

Our companies and all of the aforementioned persons who rely on the continuing viability of the Taxi Industry abide by all legislated regulations. Uber operates without regard for legislated safety measures for the protection of the passengers and drivers, not implementing the standards that apply to every taxi:-

- *Standardised surveillance cameras in all vehicles*
- *Mandated commercial vehicle inspections*
- *Mandated retirement of standard passenger vehicles after 6 years*
- *Full Commercial vehicle Third Party Insurance*

Uber has no provision for the transport of wheelchair passengers who rely on taxis each year in Queensland. The taxi industry has a mandated percentage of vehicles that it must provide for passengers with a disability; Uber has no requirement to comply with a similar percentage provision for wheelchair bound passengers, allowing Uber operators to refuse these fares effectively discriminating against these passengers.

The ramifications of this have a much greater impact. The wheelchair customers represent around 30% of our jobs. These figures come directly from Yellow Taxis. The remaining 70% of our jobs come from standard fares. The drivers rely on this proportion of their fares to provide a viable income. If this market segment is undermined by illegal "ride sharing" companies such as Uber, it will no longer be viable for the drivers to remain in the industry and they will seek alternate employment or worse, go on government provided social benefits. As a consequence, if our drivers cannot make a living and as Uber does not offer a service for wheelchair bound passengers, the 40,000 passengers with a disability currently serviced by Brisbane Maxi Taxis will be left stranded. The taxi industry as a whole transports over 1 million wheelchair bound passengers annually so the effect will be multiplied throughout the community with dramatic and significant effect.

The Taxi Industry in Queensland contributes some \$90 million in GST that flows back into the state for the benefit of Queenslanders. As Uber is an overseas corporation, revenue flows overseas and the status of GST payments on fares collected at best is unknown, at worst not paid at all.

We are not against competition in the industry; we just ask that the competition be played on a level playing field where all stakeholders are required to abide by legislated regulations, particularly those relating to safety, insurance, licencing and taxes.

If any persons or companies choose to not comply with legislated requirements then they should be penalised to the full extent of the law. Clearly Uber is able to pay the \$1.7 million in fines so far imposed on their drivers so a different approach is called for to ensure we have a system that is fair for all **and** enforceable.

To this end, I urge you to support The Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, which proposes to increase penalties through the demerit points system for those operating a taxi service without a licence.

Yours sincerely

Danny Hill