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To

Research Director
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane QLD 4000
Email:

Submission for Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

Background

My wife and I jointly own a Brisbane taxi licence which we purchased over ten years ago with savings and a loan which was gradually paid off over a 10 year period. The taxi licence is leased out and we now use the income to support us in our retirement. We started out with nothing and by hard work, discipline and investing for the long-term; we now have a passive income for retirement. It now appears that this income is now under threat from UberX.

Discussion

To me UberX is simply another multinational company that seeks to exploit local communities like many other pharmaceutical, mining and technology companies; UberX don't want to admit they are operating as a taxi service yet all the evidence does not support this, they don't want to obey the laws and regulations regarding taxi licences and they continually flout the law, they don't want to pay all the fees that regulations require normal taxi operators to pay, they don't want to adhere to regulations designed to protect customers and they don't want to pay GST or company tax like any other Australian business. They simply want to come to Australia, make a profit, pay no taxes and then repatriate the profits back to their home country, no doubt via a low tax jurisdiction. So what is the likely outcome of allowing UberX to operate in Australia?

- The taxi industry is basically made up of many small businesses, many of which have made many sacrifices to own a taxi licence and to be profitable. These small businesses are being placed a risk.

- Many people work in the taxi industry. Their employment is being placed at risk.

- The state government obtains considerable revenue via fees and charges and GST from the taxi industry, whilst the federal government receives considerable income via company and personal tax. These incomes are being placed at risk.
- The State Govt has been selling taxi plates over the past years so it has a moral obligation to honour the sale of these plates or pay compensation to all those who have paid for taxi plates over time.
- Those who have invested and saved for their future have their investment and their income at risk, forcing them back onto the age pension. Past enterprise is unrewarded and it encourages a culture of dependency.
- The regulations that are in place were presumably implemented to protect the public. If these regulations are ignored then why have the regulations at all. If it is good for one it should be good for all.
- Taxi operators cannot compete on an equal footing when one operator pays no fees or charges, pays no tax, does not pay for a licence and operates outside of the law designed to protect the public.

Summary

UberX is simply another multinational company that is seeking to earn an income by bypassing Australian regulations and law. They don't want to pay GST and they will no doubt be domiciled overseas in a low tax country to avoid paying company tax. UberX has the potential to greatly undermine a large number of small business owners, stifle employment and reduce the revenue of both the State and Federal governments, thereby passing on additional costs to the general public. I implore you to take a strong and disciplined stand against Uberx as it is simply inequitable if they are not controlled as normal taxi operators cannot compete on an equal footing due to the fees and charges placed on taxi operators. If UberX is not controlled then small business owners of taxi licences should receive compensation for losses.

If you have any questions, please contact me via one of the above methods.

Yours sincerely



Don Pickering