

Submission to the Queensland Government re: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

We are writing this as a very concerned taxi licence holder. We purchased this licence approximately 1 year ago to help finance our future retirement. This was a huge investment for us and also involved us paying a substantial amount in stamp duty to the QLD government. These restricted numbers of licences, issued by the QLD government, are able to be on sold, with the government receiving stamp duty at each transfer.

My father has previously worked within the taxi industry and my parents also own one licence which has helped finance their retirement, quite successfully. We all thought we were buying into a stable, well run and government regulated sustainable industry.

The appearance of Uber has created a very unstable future for those of us within the taxi industry. Uber and its' drivers constantly infringe the government regulations for the taxi industry, attracting only fines from the QLD government. These are paid by the company, which now expects the QLD government to change the laws and regulations to allow Uber to operate.

It seems to me this is a case of a big US company with lots of money determined it wants to run its business this way, so get over it. 20% of their fares go back to the parent company – no tax paid. I'm not sure how the 10% GST is paid if at all, since it would rely on the drivers being honest enough to declare their earnings. This appears to be a losing situation for the government and the people of QLD.

Uber says that they will create jobs, but there will be a massive loss of service and safety standards within the industry when the market is spread too thinly over too many vehicles for people to make a viable living.

Following are a few key differences between Uber and the taxi industry:

1. The taxi industry supplies heavily subsidised services for the disabled. Uber does not supply any disability service.
2. The taxi licence holder pays a security levy to provide safety at the ranks around the city on busy Friday and Saturday nights.
3. Uber has a "surge pricing" policy so that in times of high demand they can charge what they like. This happened during the Sydney siege last year. The taxi industry has a set price no matter where you live, what time it is or how busy it is.
4. Adequate insurance seems to be a big issue. Taxi's pay \$6,500/yr for full insurance. How can Uber drivers possibly be covered under normal insurance? It's too late to test that after a tragic accident.

5. Uber say the maximum age of their cars is 10yrs. How do they monitor this and check the road worthiness of these cars? The taxi industry maximum vehicle age is 6yrs and over 60% of the state's taxis are low emission, hybrid vehicles. Each taxi also has to have and maintain a security camera for passenger and driver safety.
6. Taxi companies are subject to compliance audits, 6 monthly car inspections by Department of transport and main roads (TMR), and are required to maintain auditable record keeping systems. Where is Ubers'?
7. QLD taxi operators and companies are required to checked drivers criminal and driving histories daily. Does Uber?
8. The number of taxi licences is limited and an annual fee is paid each year to renew that licence. The number of Uber drivers is open-ended.

Uber is an American technology company that I expect really doesn't care about the adverse affect its' illegal operations have. Its' bottom line will be money-tax free money that leaves this country. And the fall out if let continue is a lot of struggling Queensland companies and individuals who will be out of a job or now having to draw a pension.

Around the world governments are fighting Uber for the right to run their taxi industry as they see fit and not have big corporations dictating to them how to do it. Let Uber do this and the door is open for any big company to do what they like.

The QLD Labor party made a pre election promise to bring in tougher penalties for illegal operators under Uber and issuing demerit points to Uber drivers. Is this going to be a broken promise? NSW seems to be leading the fight by deregistering driver's cars. Maybe QLD could also be a leader in this and look after the people of this state who are working hard, paying their taxes and not expecting a free ride.

Please don't abandon the people that voted you in.

Please have the will and backbone to stand and fight.

Kind Regards
Deborah Kelly and Jen Chandler

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