



WESTERN SUBURBS TAXI DEPOT ABN 12 669 639 521

Research Director
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4001

8 October 2015

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

I am writing in support of the proposed amendment bill to Transport Legislation. The bill proposes to amend the penalty for individual drivers caught operating an unlicensed taxi service from a monetary penalty unit to include the accumulation of demerit points on the offenders drivers licence.

I have been in the taxi industry for over 43 years and I currently operate 97 taxi service licences from my taxi depot. I completely support the amendment bill for the following reasons:

1. Ride-sharing companies are currently running rife in Brisbane, operating taxi services without a taxi service licence. The current penalty for the unlicensed operation of a taxi service has a maximum penalty of 160 penalty units (\$18,216.00), this is not sufficient to stop the current companies from performing the illegal activity that is detrimental to the taxi industry as we know it. They have a large financial backing from an international company and money does not appear to be an issue for them.
2. Despite being issued with a cease and desist order by Queensland Transport in May 2014, Uber continue to operate and are displaying a blatant disregard for Queensland law by continuing to recruit drivers and customers and claiming that they are a genuine and legal alternative for taxi services. By definition, taxi service means "a public passenger service, other than an excluded public passenger service, provided by a motor vehicle under which the vehicle ... (b) provides a demand responsive service under which members of the public are able to hire the vehicle through electronic communication". It is un-deniable that ride-sharing services and their drivers (using smart phone apps) are providing a taxi service to the public.

3. The passengers are not being told that they are using an illegal service, in fact, the ride-sharing companies are advertising their services everywhere. I personally have heard advertisements on most of the commercial radio stations, seen advertisements on shopper docket from Woolworths recruiting drivers, been shown handouts left in letterboxes. I have seen Uber fare estimates and links to download the app on travel sites such as TripAdvisor, they are all over the internet. They are even paying drivers up to \$400.00 just to sign up to their app. How can a company providing an illegal service do such things?

There is genuine concern within the taxi industry that if the operators and drivers of ride-sharing companies are allowed to continue to operate, the taxi industry will no longer be viable. There are thousands of taxi owners and operators across the state and the country that are having their livelihoods threatened by these rouge operators. It is affecting our daily lives. It appears that if the amendment bill is not passed and the drivers are not penalised with the additional demerit points, that there will be no stopping these companies. The taxi industry provides a valuable service to the public and I feel that the government should be doing more to protect our industry and stop the current law-breaking activity. Passing this bill will surely reduce the number of drivers willing to break the law by driving for ride sharing companies.

Thank you for your consideration,



David Hooke