

David Thomas



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Research Director
Infrastructure, Planning & Natural Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane

Re: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

I would like to offer strong support for this bill.

No company, not even Uber, have a right to unilaterally exempt itself from public laws. This is not civil disobedience, it's racketeering.

Ubers only different because its business plan relies on them disobeying our laws. Most Qld Taxi companies have been using Apps for booking & despatch well before Uber arrived in Qld. Ubers claim of being a high tech innovative digital age company is completely false. Qld Taxis comprise modern fleets (ave. vehicle age 2.3 years), most being hybrid, energy efficient clean vehicles, complete with GPS tracking, Smart Phone Apps, payment options including cash or card, radio to base contact, in cab security camera systems, and phone contact to base for customers. The true leading innovator is the Qld Taxi Industry.

Uber use private vehicles aged up to 10 years. Most being petrol, inefficient polluting cars. Qld taxis are a maximum of 6 years old . Taxis are subject to frequent audits by TMR & Uber is not. In fact once car is approved by Uber it is only an app & the vehicle used could be switched to older and even unroadworthy.

Ubers appeal to the market is on price. In fact it is sometimes cheaper than buses ref: Brisbane single parent who uses Uber to take her 4 children to & from school each day (Westside News). Our city of Brisbane has experienced a large decline in bus usage whilst at the same time a big increase in traffic congestion. Commuters are unfairly facing ever increasing bus fares due to private polluting cars replacing bus usage.

Uber is only cheaper because it 1) evades paying GST 2) pays no income tax 3) is non compliant 4) although a US company it uses a tax haven in the Netherlands. Uber evades our systems because it believes it is big enough to not have to comply! Ubers business model relies on it bypassing every conceivable law and regulatory requirement that other public transport providers must comply with. Its value to our economy is nil.

During busy periods Uber uses 'surge pricing' which can leave customers reeling with fares that are 6 times higher(+500%). Customers are often unaware of this impost until their credit card has been hit & a receipt is emailed to them. This price gauging is unseen, deceptive and in breach of Qld Transport regulations and also in breach of the Consumer Competition Act. Ubers drivers in attempts to improve their income do manipulate surge pricing by restricting supply. This is collusion.

Taxis are available 24/7 and 20% of the fleets are wheelchair accessible. The provision of these services rely on taxis making a profit during busy periods in support of their ability to offer less or non profitable services to all citizens including the disabled and for persons living in outer fringe areas.

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Uber drivers can select the times they work and areas of most profitability. Uber are in breach of the Qld Discrimination Act and the Federal Disability Discrimination Act by not offering wheelchair accessible vehicles. Uber ignores its responsibility to society because it is not in its business plan.

Taxi operators are required to check the histories of drivers to ensure a fit and proper individual is allowed to drive. This is important for all especially children, the aged and infirm, people with disabilities & for woman. Ubers ridiculous claim that they are a technology company lets them avoid all of the fiduciary, legal or moral responsibility in regards to the service they provide. Their Technology claims amount to noise about them working on driverless cars & the fact that they have employed the notorious hackers that sent Jeeps into a spin in the US.

Every taxi undergoes regular inspections by TMR for vehicle safety and appearance. Taxi companies carry out more regular checks to ensure those in its fleet get marked on vehicle safety & presentation. Uber don't have these checks.

Regular compliance audits are held on taxi companies and operators. Industry standards prescribed by legislation must be met. Records for auditing by Qld Govt must be kept by Taxi Companies covering customer trip experiences through to feedback and complaint management to lost property. Uber has none. In fact Uber are virtually impossible to even contact should a customer have a need. It is Ubers way of avoiding litigation and liabilities.

Uber are intent that govts rewrite and remove laws that don't suit them. I liken this to a burglar entering my house, holding me hostage, paying no rent and stealing my food & money. Our laws are there for community benefit. No govt can abdicate their legal & moral responsibility in upholding the law for the benefit of someone who doesn't agree. No one is above the law. That someone could be an individual or a US corporation. Uber offer nothing special, nothing that is different, and must not receive special treatment.

Taxis operate on extremely low margins & each taxi is a small Australian business, providing jobs, paying GST, income taxes and compliance costs. Many Australians depend on taxi income to put food on the table. Each taxi is an individual business, highly competitive, and welcomes competition. But no taxi business will survive given the unfair advantage that Uber believe is their due. The unfair advantage equates to close on 50% of each taxi fare when taxes, compliance, fees, commercial registration, commercial insurance and CTP are added in. Uber pay none!

World wide Uber are facing restrictions on its growth and have in numerous countries been outlawed. Predictions have been made (Fortune) that they could fail as their business plan is flawed. In fact their largest backer in seed funding was the company accused of creating most of the problems in the financial markets that caused the Global Financial Crisis. Already most all of Europe, Japan and Asia have banned Uber. Their success in South America has been halted with them being banned in Rio De Janeiro. Strong governments are acting.

World wide Ubers drivers are under stress. Poor pay and Uber jacking up their own margins and paying drivers less. There are numerous Uber driver blogs that express their frustrations. One only needs to do the sums ie in Brisbane the fare rate per km is \$1.30 and from this 20% goes to Uber leaving the driver with \$1.04c RACQ recently published car ownership running costs for a medium sized private car as being 78c a km. Factor in that the driver legally should pay GST on the fare it would leave the driver with 39c per km for each km of the trip. But for each trip there is usually 50% to 100% more unpaid travel ie to and from a fare which if only 50% of the 78c per km vehicle running cost it amounts to another deduction of 39c. Amount driver gets is zero! Admittedly there is a \$2.50 flag fall to factor in but that limits the Uber driver to short trips if they want to end up with a \$. The sums are on the following page:-

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Trip of 30 ks with a return to start ie 60ks round trip (not uncommon)

Flag fall	\$2.50
30 kms x \$1.30	\$39.00
Total Fare	\$41.50
Less Ubers take	-\$8.30
Less GST (if paid)	-\$4.15
Driver gets	\$29.05
Less car costs	
60kms @ 78c per km	-\$46,80 (fuel, tyres, servicing, insurance, registration & depreciation)

Driver out of pocket by
A loss of \$17.75

Driver retention rate for Uber is terrible ie the \$29 initially looks good for an outer suburban trip that would take ca 1 hour round trip. When they wake up they have been had they move on or according to some overseas reports some go out on their own with a rogue service'

Allowing Uber to continue to operate is a race to the bottom that no one can win. Ultimately all Queenslanders would lose. The Qld and Australian economy would lose. Service would decline, livelihoods and health will be impacted and like in other jurisdictions there could be civil unrest. Uber calls it a 'free market'. Healthy competition is a free market & one where Uber cannot survive as like a child they hurl abuse & pick up their bat and ball and refuse to play by the rules.

Uber drivers operating illegally in private cars present a real danger hence the loss of points addresses the problem ie without drivers Uber cannot operate.

Sincerely

David Thomas