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The Research Director
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

We, Michael and Lorna Stevenson being residents of Queensland and small business owners wish to make the following submission in support of the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

We implore the implementation of this bill in the interests of public safety, enforced compliance with current laws, punishment of those who defy the laws of the State and the protection of those small business operators who comply with the laws and regulations governing the Taxi Industry to provide a safe and reliable service to the community.

The taxi Industry in Queensland consists of many facets of the employment sector from major employers like Taxi Booking Companies down to the individual Taxi Driver who operates as a Sole Trader in compliance with the Australian Tax Laws.

The Taxi Council of Queensland is the peak body negotiating with Government in all aspects of Regulation and Legislation pertinent to the provision of Taxi services in Queensland. Taxi Council Queensland have demonstrated that the following groups make up the Taxi Industry in Queensland.

3,000+ Cabs - 2,800+ Owners - 1,200+ Operators - 11,000+ Drivers = 15,000+ Small Businesses.

Every one of these groups contributes to the employment of Queenslanders and the payment of taxes including Goods and Services tax, a major component of State Revenue.

Approximately 20 per-cent of the 3261 taxi vehicles being operated in Queensland are wheelchair accessible, providing a vital service to persons with disabilities and special needs. These passengers form a significant part of the estimated 110 million responses to requests for taxi services in Queensland each year. The actual cost of replacement of one Wheelchair Accessible Taxi we purchased in April 2015 was in excess of \$75,000.00.

Like many of the small business owners across Australia we have funded our business and our future, (hoping to have a saleable asset) and our contribution to the employment of the people needed to operate these businesses by mortgaging our home. Our greatest asset and our entire future is put at risk by the potential destruction of legal and legitimate small business that is posed by the operation of illegal taxi services and Government inaction.

The operation of our small business generates employment for Taxi Operators, Taxi Drivers, Call Centre Staff, and many other businesses dependant on the motor vehicle industry for employment.

We do not propose to regale you with endless lists of facts and figures which may, or may not be verifiable, but wish only to give you an insight into the Taxi Industry in Queensland as seen through the eyes of actual participants in that industry. And illustrate some of the undeniable threats facing this industry and those who rely on our industry for safe and affordable transportation.

1. Licenced taxi services offer safe travel with approved drivers in modern vehicles which are regularly inspected for compliance with regulated industry standards. Illegal taxis do not.
2. Licenced taxi services generate income for the State via Licence Fees, Operator Fees, Taxi Driver Authority fees, Income Tax and GST. Illegal taxi services do not. All profits are moved offshore and no revenue is collected by the State or Commonwealth.
3. Licenced taxi services provide 24 hour service 365 days of the year to all members of the public according to regulated fares. Illegal taxi services do not. They only work peak hours selecting which clients they wish to transport and inflating prices as they see fit. Evidence of this opportunistic price gouging was the demand from UBER of a minimum payment of \$100.00 to send an illegal taxi in response to calls for service during the Lindt Café Siege in Sydney. Legal taxi services did not attempt to profit from this act of terrorism.
4. Licenced taxi services provide transport to persons confined to wheelchairs with specifically designed vehicles and appropriately trained drivers. Illegal taxi services do not. If the legitimate taxi business in Queensland is allowed to be decimated by illegal operators these services provided to the most needy and most vulnerable members of our community could disappear. Who would pay \$75,000.00 for a purpose built vehicle, which must by regulation be replaced every eight years, when they can operate an illegal business from their ten year old family car?
5. Operators of licenced taxis face the real threat that devaluation of their assets (Taxi Licences) can lead to financial hardship and even the loss of their home, should financial institutions demand increased security to guarantee their loans.

We thank you for the opportunity to be heard via this submission. We trust the value to the community, the protection of legitimate small businesses and the imperative of maintaining a regulated and licenced taxi industry in Queensland is recognised, and enforced by law with the implementation of the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

[REDACTED]
Michael Gordon Joseph Stevenson

Dated 10-10-2015

Lorna May Stevenson [REDACTED]

Dated 10.10.2015