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

Fraser Hethorn


Dear Director,

I thank you for the opportunity to have a say in relation to legislation which was tabled on the 16th September 2015 by the Member for Mt Isa, Mr Rob Katter who introduced a private member's bill, the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

The introduction of this bill was necessitated by the frustrations of licensed taxi operators from city and country areas who have been under siege by illegal taxi operators over the past twelve months. Fortunately, Mr Rob Katter MP has seen our plight and has stepped up to the plate to assist us.

A TAXI is a motor vehicle licensed to transport passengers in return for payment of a fare and typically fitted with a taximeter.

The dictionary meaning of ILLEGAL is, 'contrary to or forbidden by law, especially criminal law. So we can deduce that the people operating these illegal taxis are breaking the law. I would like to add here that I grew up in a family of thirteen children and my father died when I was about four years old. My mother instilled in us to always obey the law.

Illegal taxi operators do not comply with the Queensland Transport Acts and Regulations, which are administered by the Queensland Government which are there to ensure the highest possible level of customer service. Illegal taxi operators continue to break the law and use every trick possible to avoid being fined by our Transport Inspectors.

This illegal taxi operator does not pay income tax or GST.

The taxi industry provides many more services than just 24/7 passenger transport one of which is social inclusion for the elderly and disabled of which unfortunately, the incursion of this illegal taxi operator could have a negative effect on the ability to provide services as such via the Government Taxi Subsidy Scheme.

An erosion of the present taxi system could be detrimental to the operation of wheel chair capable taxis and taxi fleets in general. Part of our job is to provide a service to help the elderly, sick and frail people who rely on the Taxi Subsidy Scheme to get out and about and not be stuck at home.

Non urgent, non ambulance patients for Queensland Health use our taxis to attend appointments at hospitals and clinics. We are obliged under the state regulations to provide our services 24 hours per day seven days a week. The illegal operators choose when they want to work, and this is only the busy periods.

At these times illegal taxi operators are compelled to increase the fares to take advantage of the demand. How is that fair to the consumer.

It is often said that taxi fares are too expensive. we would like you to understand that a great part of the expense incurred by operators is the cost of conforming to the legislation set down by the State Government regarding passenger transport requirements.

Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

None of the regulatory requirements are in place to protect the taxi operator. It is all to do with the safety of the travelling public, and we feel that is how it should be.

Queensland taxis are required by law to have a very high rate of third party insurance to cover passengers in the unlikely event of an accident. The illegal drivers employed by this illegal taxi company operate with incorrect third party insurance and comprehensive insurances. This could be a major problem for passengers should they be involved in an accident.

While the illegal taxis are presently popular with some of the younger members of our society, i feel very sure that things will change when the free bottles of water and discount travel vouchers are no longer handed out.

We are not against competition, we thrive on it; all we want is a level playing field.

For the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015 to be passed I would like the State Government to consider a take up with the Katter Bill in a cognate debate.

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing.

Edmond Burke

Your faithfully



Fraser Hethorn

For your information I have attached background information on the operation of Taxi sedans and vehicle equipment and insurance cost comparisons with the illegal taxis.

Equipment Installed in Taxis

A taxi cab is fitted with a taxi meter to calculate the fare.

When the taximeter is activated a flagfall is shown on the meter. The charge for travel is distance travelled plus the time when the vehicle is stationary and the cost of tolls encountered along the route.

An epos machine is installed to process bank cards and a GPS communication system is fitted.

A hail light is located on the roof of the vehicle. When a white light is showing on the hail light the taxi is available for hire.

A photograph of the driver with his licence number showing is located on the dash of the vehicle. All taxi drivers are aware that the Transport Department undertakes regular traffic and criminal history checks.

For the safety of the driver a distress button is placed in the vehicle for the driver to press. When the button is pressed three things happen simultaneously.

The Taxi Company receives a message.

A microphone in the vehicle is activated.

A green light appears on the top of the hail light to alert any other taxi drivers who could be near.

The dispatch supervisor can see via the GPS system the exact location of where the taxi is and he can hear the conversation in the taxi. The supervisor will engage with the police and all other taxi drivers in close proximity to the distressed driver to help resolve the incident quickly. The conversation in the taxi is recorded and can be used as evidence should this incident end up in court.

Brisbane taxis are clearly visible and are painted in the company colours. The taxi cab number is located on the front and rear mudguards, on the inside of the windscreen and on the rear of the vehicle. e.g. y701. Also a number in braille is stuck on the doors just below the door handles for visually impaired people to read.

On the front left hand side of the windscreen is the current machinery label. All taxis have a machinery inspection every six months.

We are fortunate to have the most progressive state in Australia for the vehicles and equipment we use. Taxi Companies in the larger centres have had apps for many years.

Approximately 60% of the Queensland taxi fleet are low emission hybrid vehicles.
e.g. Toyota Prius

In the last ten years the maxi taxis have increased in number and now represent 20% of the taxi fleet throughout the state.

Vehicle replacement.

The Department of Transport requires that the sedan taxi vehicles have a life of six years. In the bigger cities of Queensland most of the sedans are replaced within three years. The age limit for maxi taxis is eight years. The maxis are removed from most fleets after six years.

Queensland Taxi Insurance Requirements.

Queensland taxis are required to have class 3 third party insurance. Cost \$6500.00 per annum
The comprehensive insurance which covers the vehicle and the driver. Cost \$5000.00 per annum
All taxis are required to have 20 million in public liability insurance.

Illegal Taxi Insurance

Private vehicles have a class 1 third party insurance. Cost \$700.00 per annum
Public liability insurance. ? unknown
Comprehensive insurance ? unknown
Vehicle age limit I am led to believe they have an age limit up to 10 years.

Maxi Taxi Production in Queensland

The best maxi taxis are made here in Brisbane. The new Toyota Hiace vehicles are stripped right back and reassembled from the floor up. The vehicle is fully fitted out ready for the road with a full taxi pack including a side step and hydraulic lifter mounted inside of the vehicle.

If you would like to see how the Maxis are put together you can contact [redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

Please give [redacted] a few days notice so he can have a couple of vehicles in the production line. I would say you will be very impressed just like I was.

Fraser Hethorn