



The Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament House  
Brisbane

15 October 2015

Dear Sir

**Re: Submission on the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.**

I am making a submission in support of the proposed change to legislation, the *Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015*.

I own a Queensland taxi licence. I purchased this licence a number of years ago and have operated it since as a small business, including driving the taxi myself.

Purchasing the licence involved taking out a loan to cover the cost of the licence, vehicle and stamp duty. Repaying this loan took years of hard work and long hours of driving the taxi. In that time I have conscientiously met all government licensing requirements such as the installation and updating of security equipment. I have always maintained my vehicles to the highest standards. I have complied fully with the requirement to belong to a taxi company and I have always paid full comprehensive insurance and the registration and CTP applicable for a passenger transport vehicle.

My taxi licence provides full time employment for 2 people and part-time employment for one person. I ensure that the drivers of my taxi have met the industry standard training requirements and have ABNs and I regularly check their ongoing eligibility to drive the taxi through the Queensland Transport database.

In short, I comply completely with the laws of Qld. This compliance is costly, but until now has applied equally to all taxi operators. I, as with all taxi licence owners and operators, meet requirements because we recognise that this is a requirement of a regulated industry.

When I entered the taxi business, it would have been cheaper and easier to simply use my private car. However, I found this was not possible in Queensland, as the government has established standards and safety requirements in the industry, which all other law-abiding Queensland operators meet. This has been the scenario until Uber entered and decided to disregard Queensland laws, to go ahead and use private vehicles and drivers and operate as it wishes. This means there seems to be one law for Queensland taxi owners, operators and drivers and another for a wealthy company like Uber.

Purchasers like myself have bought taxi licences in good faith on the understanding that the taxi industry is regulated in Queensland. Successive governments, both Labour and Liberal, have reiterated their support for this regulation over the years.

Those like me who have purchased a taxi licence to look after their own future and retirement funding rather than relying on government welfare should not be disadvantaged.

The following points outline why I believe this legislation amendment is essential.

## To Support Due Process

Government should not countenance being told how to change requirements to suit an overseas company that is flouting current requirements, continuing to operate in defiance of orders to stop and is encouraging Queenslanders to drive illegal taxis. Uber display a disregard for what government regulation aims to achieve. There should be no further discussion with Uber until they meet current requirements to operate legally. Surely the right approach for a potential new operator should be for that organisation to either meet all legal requirements before they commence operating, or to negotiate with government to have appropriate changes made prior to commencing their operation.

This is what has happened up to now. For years the taxi companies have worked with the government to improve the provision of taxi services in Queensland. Taxi operators have met all requirements imposed by government; these requirements have increased over time and operators have complied within specified timeframes, eg installing safety measures. These increasingly stringent requirements continue to be implemented; TMR recently advised of an upgrade to security cameras. We will do this, at a significant cost, because it is a government requirement. It appears that we work within the law but Uber does not feel they have to in any way.

Laws can always be improved, but there are correct procedures. The government is reviewing the taxi industry, this is an appropriate procedure. Defiance of current laws by a wealthy overseas company is not correct procedure.

## Conclusion

The government must act strongly to uphold its own legislation that it has put in place to regulate the taxi industry. Uber should not operate until it meets all requirements. It appears that some Uber drivers have been fined but these have simply been paid by Uber, so the current penalties for illegal taxi services are having no effect. This is why a change to legislation is needed to at least impose demerit points as additional deterrent to illegal drivers, to enforce the regulatory framework, to ensure the safety of passengers, support the taxi operators who are working within the law and maintain a fair and safe passenger transport system in Queensland.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.