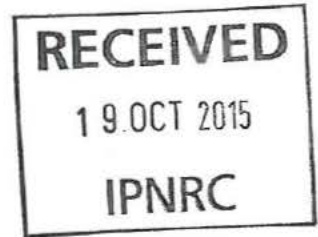


Elizabeth Chopra



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#164



To: Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Subject: Transport Amendment Bill
Date: 17th October 15.

To Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

I write in support of The Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, initiated by the Katter Australia Party.

I jointly invested in a taxi licence with my parents over 15 years ago. We invested in this industry in good faith because government had clearly indicated that all licenses would be subject to similar controls and that the ability to offer taxi services would be restricted to properly licensed persons. The incursion of Uber X, since April 2014, has impacted our income and continues to threaten our livelihood.

My parents were counting on the sale of the licence to help fund their retirement and were planning to retire in 2014. Likewise, I was planning to use the proceeds of my share of the licence to assist funding the education of my three children. We have received no offers for the licence since it was listed on the market in July 2014. My elderly parents have had to delay their retirement and have grave concerns for their financial future. My mother has a chronic health condition. It is devastating to see the impact of this stress on my parents. We were eagerly awaiting the outcome of the Taxi Strategic Plan so that we could find a solution. Unfortunately, this has been delayed until August 2016.

My parents are hard working Australians of immense integrity. They have taken pride in the provision of a high quality consumer service. It is inconceivable to us that a multinational corporation that does not pay Australian taxes and was told to cease and desist, has openly disregarded the law by actively enabling their drivers to operate without any regard to legislated regulations and social responsibility.

In my employment I see taxi operators of many ethnic backgrounds assisting elderly and disabled Australians access their local communities every day. The compassion and care they provide in these duties is humbling. Uber X has made **no** provision for vulnerable elderly & disabled Queenslanders. This in combination with their flagrant disregard for the law, highlights their commitment to growth at the expense of social responsibilities. There is a reason why Uber is facing an international backlash regarding its business ethics.

Whilst many Australians are embracing the use of Uber X because they are focused on price, they are typically unaware of the greater social implications of doing so i.e. tax avoidance, compliance issues and impact on the livelihoods of

fellow Australians. The opportunity to drive and make tax free additional income is appealing for many people however this is at the expense of hard working small business operators who have spent years building up their businesses despite the many operating and regulatory costs imposed on them.

It has been very disappointing to see instances where the media has promoted Uber X without adequately researching all aspects of this issue. Consequently many of the general public remain unaware of the larger social implications.

We are not against competition in the industry, and are aware that if used ethically, technology can enhance the provision of quality transport services.

The current situation where a Multinational organisation is actively enabling their drivers to avoid penalties puts law abiding taxi owner operators at a huge disadvantage. It also puts uninformed consumers at risk. **This is not ethical competition.** It is grossly unfair and unethical to expect law abiding taxi operators to continue to operate in this lawless environment.

Until development of the Strategic Taxi plan in August 2016, I implore the government to support the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, and enforce the law.

In developing the Strategic Taxi Plan for Queensland I ask that policy ensures that any competition be played on a level playing field where **all** stakeholders are required to abide by legislated regulations, particularly those relating to safety, insurance, licensing and taxes. It is crucial that incentives remain to make the purchase of taxi licences viable.

In the event that the government should choose to relax licensing requirements, I submit that the government has a moral and ethical responsibility to compensate all the existing taxi owners who were clearly misled when tendering or purchasing their licenses.

Your Sincerely


Elizabeth Chopra