

## SUBMISSION

We have been in the Taxi industry for 30 years as an owner operator, and currently as a leasor. During this period I (Barry) have served on the Board of Black and White Quick Service Taxis Cairns and later as Chairman. After moving to the Gold Coast (where also had a licence) I was elected Chairman of Regent Taxis and was an active member of the Taxi Council (QLD) Board. Participating at this level for a period spanning approximately 15 years.

During this period I worked with the Government and local authorities to better the service delivery and maintain a positive image of the Taxi industry with the public. I have been proactive in initiating new innovations within the industry and open to suggestions to improve productivity, service delivery and safety issues in the industry and with the general community.

As such I find the current situation in Queensland Taxi industry disturbing I understand the governments need for an enquiry, however, this should have been implemented months ago when the problem was first brought to their attention.

We are not against competition in the industry, we just ask that the competition be played on a level playing field where all stakeholders are required to abide by the same legislated regulations.

It should be noted that the Taxi Industry in Queensland contributes some \$90 million in GST that flows back into the state for the benefit of all Queenslanders. *As Uber is an overseas corporation, revenue flows overseas and the status of GST payments on fares collected at best is unknown, at worst not paid at all.*

### **Licensing issues:**

Licence holders in Queensland have been subject to Government regulation and with license application fees determined by a tender process which has seen tender prices to increase with the average price in excess of \$500,000 being paid to the Queensland Government per licence. *Uber operators are not subject to government licensing and pay no fee!*

Taxi owners are required by regulation to pay registration, accreditation, inspection and third party insurance that are currently \$7,000 per year. *Again Uber drivers only pay the cost of registration and insuring a private vehicle.*

As all fares are set by Government and subject to regulation that does not allow taxi operators the option of price matching with the illegal operators who have no restrictions of pricing and don't have overheads required in operate a Taxi under current Government requirements.

*This gives the **Uber** operators a distinct advantage. Where is the level playing field?*

## **Public and Driver Safety:**

As a member of the Taxi Industry I have worked towards implementation of initiatives to improve safety and ensure to training and authorisation of drivers. Due to the continued co-operation of representatives of the industry, companies and department regulations and requirements have been an ongoing movement towards better service delivery and safety to both drivers and community.

These measures all come a considerable cost to owners and companies to implement and to provide the necessary training and inspections to ensure all owners and drivers are compliant.

- Taxi drivers are subject to police criminal background checks and required to complete a five day training course.

*Uber drivers do not comply!*

- Taxis are equipped with security cameras, GPS monitoring, Call Centre's are well trained in emergency procedures that insure safety to drivers and passengers.

*Similar protection is not available with private vehicles used by Uber.*

- Taxi drivers are required to have Zero % blood alcohol level.

*Uber drives may have a level up to .05%.*

- All Taxi's are subject to safety inspections every six months.

*This does not apply to Uber.*

## **Disability access**

The Taxi industry has mandated percentage of vehicles that it must provide for passengers with a disability. These are specialised vehicles that have **additional cost** to provide the necessary lifts and safety equipment required for safe carriage of wheelchairs and passengers.

*Additionally, Uber has no provision of transport for wheelchair passengers and has no requirement to comply with a similar percentage provision for wheelchair bound passengers allowing UBER divers to refuse these fares, effectively discriminating against these passengers.*

Consequently; if drivers are unable to make a living due to "ride sharing" by illegal companies ie: Uber the 1 million wheelchairs bound passengers serviced annually will have a significant and dramatic effect on these passengers.

My family currently have three Taxi licences, two passenger vehicles and one Maxi taxi with wheelchair access. In good faith we and others in the industry have brought licences, operated and worked continually to improve the industry over many decades. We have always paid taxes and levies required, but for see with the decline in income created by the current ride-share" competition that GST and other taxes will be severely reduced. It is difficult to understand why now an overseas company who do not pay tax in this country can just walk in and start up business that is not within the current legislation with no recompense.

*This should be an issue that Government consider as the lack of revenue will affect their ability to provide infrastructure and other services within Queensland.*

To this end, I urge you to support the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015 and complete the inquire into the industry in a concise and speedy manner to relieved the anxiety being felt by owners, drivers and the public in relation to the safety, reliability and essentially the viability of the Taxi Industry in the future.

Peter (Barry ) Henry & Lee Henry

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