

From: [Gerald McGrade](#)
To: [Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee](#)
Subject: Re: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015
Date: Sunday, 18 October 2015 4:22:14 PM

On 18 Oct 2015, at 4:20 pm, Gerald McGrade [REDACTED] wrote:

Mr Chairman,

This Submission is in four parts:

- A. Preamble by investor in the regulated Queensland Taxi Industry
- B. Share ride supporters
- C. Legislative Authority
- D. Propaganda
- E. Conclusion

Part A. PREAMBLE

This Submission supports the conviction that the Queensland Government regulation of the Taxi Industry, is persistently treated with disdain and is continuously flouted by Uber drivers, or so called "Uber Partners" and that some sections of the regulations must be given more weight by the Government in order to enforce compliance. **We must support this Bill. We believe that the simplest way to deter the illegal operations of the Uber drivers is to penalise them with demerit points, in addition to fining them.**

My wife and I are tax paying Australians and we purchased two Taxi Licenses, issued by the Queensland Government. We are also Shareholders in Gold Coast Cabs which is engaged in the Government regulated taxi business. We pay the fees to have our Accreditation and Taxi Licences renewed. The vehicles for which we hold the Licence plates must comply with all regulations of the Authority. These regulations are updated regularly -for instance updating on-board safety cameras. The taxi industry must bear these costs. Compliance by the taxi driver is also the industry's responsibility. He must comply with all regulations of the Authority as they apply to him and he is monitored by the Authority.

We understand the legality and purpose of the Queensland Government Regulations and we bear the considerable cost burden of our business being extensively regulated. The Taxi Industry of Queensland complies and is constantly looking for ways to improve safety and service, above and beyond our regulated obligations.

My wife and I are not currently a financial burden on the State. We invested our retirement funds in Queensland Government Taxi Licences because the taxi industry is well regulated by the Queensland Government. If the State abandons us by not enforcing the regulations, we may be compelled to seek

restitution or assistance from our Government because the unregulated law breakers will win ground and force us out of business. The Queensland Government Taxi Licences which we purchased will be valueless and it seems anarchy will prevail as to safety and service.

Increasingly, we feel a high level of frustration. We comply with regulations. The predators do not. It should not be forgotten that the Queensland Government regulates the Taxi Industry for very good reasons such as safety and service. How then can it not ban unlicensed “share ride” services. Where are the costly safety and service regulations for them?

We believe that the term "Ride Sharing" has been adopted by Uber in a cynical attempt to avoid regulatory constrictions and that Uber looks like a taxi service and probably is!!

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Part B. SHARE RIDE SUPPORTERS

The companies breaking the rules are earning profits at the expense of legal operators. Some do so without paying tax in Australia. As licensed operators lose business, so the Tax Office loses revenue. As more illegal drivers emerge, regulated drivers lose opportunities for earnings. Each job created by ride share operators is one less job for a regulated driver. **There are no new jobs created.**

The share ride proponent, “Uber”, is a garish company that spends money defending the indefensible by aiding and abetting “partners” to break the law. Money reaped in avoiding tax is used to pay drivers' fines (indicative amount per fine \$1700). This is done to satisfy a law fractured by them to encourage driving for hire whilst unlicensed.

In other words, Uber promotes illegal activities, and worse, it provides support expenses by utilising funds extracted by them free of tax !

Uber arrogantly and mischievously attempts to justify its actions by erroneously claiming it is creating jobs using advanced technology. In fact, it is stealing jobs. Every Uber driver (partner) earning a dollar has taken that dollar from a Government regulated, law abiding, tax paying, taxi driver.

Uber offers a Taxi Service, disguised or cunningly portrayed as something else, to avoid Regulation and in conspiracy with its partners, when he or she is apprehended, Uber pays the fine. The burden for the driver is minimised to the level of simple inconvenience! The existing method to compel compliance instituted by the Authority, has therefore been effectively immobilised.

As outlined above, the Uber plan seeks to avoid constraints and encourages illegal activity by thwarting Regulation. In other words it is a scam - making a mockery of the rules, whilst the offending driver is freed from the burden of being penalised monetarily.

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Part C Legislative Authority

The Queensland Government has the control lever to balance the needs of commuters. By selling Government licences, It increases the number of taxis on the road to satisfy demand. It charges taxi licence holders a premium for the right to operate. The Government regulates all aspects of the taxi industry for safety and legality in order to protect its citizens. The Queensland Government must remain firm and back its Authority, with action, against unlicensed, unregistered, individuals, who unjustly claim to be “moderns” .

I am angry that our Queensland Government, for whatever reason, seems to go along with Uber's claim that technology is a benefit and should be embraced - **but who benefits?** One clear beneficiary is the company known as “Uber”. It is a large, foreign based company which side steps it's tax obligations to Australia. Uber must surely be considered a threat to our law and order due to it's support for the illegal activities of its drivers (which must be **seen** as illegal, since fines are imposed by the Authority on Uber drivers when they are apprehended).

The regulated taxi industry suffers an expensive injustice perpetrated by the Authority because the industry is comprehensively regulated. Uber is not.

A recent letter from the Authority, to us, on new camera installations clearly indicates continued interest from the Authority on updating safety regulations in our taxi operations. We must comply - we are registered and on notice. The Authority states in its letter that no financial assistance for this update will be made available. However, the taxi industry will bear this financial expense without quibble because it is acutely aware of the need for safety in its operations. Uber maintains that the app used by them guarantees safety because the vehicle and its occupants are tracked, therefore it prevents crime more efficiently, but images provided by cameras installed in taxis have a proven track record as excellent aids to a conviction for perpetrators of crime.

Uber and the like are not registered therefore they will have not received any updating on safety in their vehicles from the Authority. What are the safety measures now in their vehicles? AND If they keep getting away with their ingenious claim that they are not a taxi company and therefore are outside existing regulations, what becomes of safety measures in their vehicles in the future?

I have outlined my frustrations above. I hope that legislators will take notice and retain regulatory control of the taxi industry for the benefit and safety of its users.

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Part D Propaganda

Whilst gathering signatures petitioning against illegal drivers, I learned that people were swayed to use Uber by its blurbs that it is much cheaper to hire a share ride - and there's more - bottled water is sometimes supplied by the driver free of charge! Well, water stored in plastic bottles, unrefrigerated for an undisclosed time could surely not be the greatest of attractions.

As to being cheaper, regulated taxis charge regulated fares. Unregulated Uber uses a devious algorithm calculated to increase fares when demand increases. They say this is a good thing because at least the customer is warned that higher fares will be charged. Therefore, taken on average, Uber will cost the traveller more - and increasingly so if the illegal service they offer gains ground in the future. In addition, regulated taxis must service the designated Licensed area. Uber has no such Licensing obligation and will pick and choose profitable areas.

Also whilst gathering signatures, I was told of the horrific rape that occurred in a Brisbane taxi some years back. My acquaintance omitted to mention that the taxi driver was convicted on clear evidence provided by the mandatory inboard camera that is fitted to all regulated taxis in Queensland. Uber drivers do not provide this tool against criminals. Even if they did, one would think that filming passengers, in a car driven by an unregistered driver without said passenger permission, would be illegal also.

Part E Conclusion

We must support this Bill. The simplest way to deter the illegal operations of Uber and it's like is to penalise the drivers with penalty points, in addition to fining them.

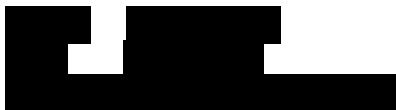
We must stand by the present regulatory framework imposed by the State of Queensland. To do otherwise and succumb to bullying on the part of big international companies shows disrespect to our country and its citizens, weakness on the part of the Queensland Government and division and disunity in our State.

To avoid anarchy, it is only when the Authority regains complete control of the Regulations that consideration should be given to allowing other business models to participate in the Taxi Industry. Competition must be encouraged but not at the expense of allowing illegal operations. In the long term, this is not a benefit to anybody.

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Yours faithfully

Gerald McGrade

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