



18-10-2015

Robert Hopsick


To The Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resource Committee,

Subject: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

It is of great frustration and disappointment towards the Queensland Government that I am here today having to write this letter as a submission to plead with the Queensland Government to enforce the laws, the laws that should have been enforced since May 2014 when the cease and desist order was first put in place.

My name is Robert Hopsick and I was a legal taxi driver from 1969 to 1973. Then in 1973 I purchased an existing licence and was a legal owner operator until 2010. It was my sole means of income until my wife was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2010, then I became a fulltime carer for her, therefore having to lease my licence out and rely on the lease money as an income. I have never received any assistance from the government as I am a self funded retiree, and still pay income tax to this day at the age of 68. For most of these years I worked in excess of 80 hours per week as the running costs to run a legal taxi in Brisbane were enormous and still are.

As a legal taxi driver and at present a legal taxi licence owner, I have always abided by the laws of the transport act and complied with the ATO with an ABN. Now I have to sit back and watch an illegal operation take away my small business and my retirement fund, while the government allows uber to continue to operate illegally. I am in absolute disbelief that the transport department has put it in "the too hard basket".

I find it insulting that I receive letters annually from the Queensland Government, such as the **taxi industry security levy notice** with a Please note footed down the bottom stating: *Failure to pay by the due date may result in suspension or cancellation of the taxi service licence to which it applies.* Whereas uber drivers are operating illegally and abide by no rules and regulations. I also have to abide by 17 terms and conditions of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 and Regulation.

How can the legal taxi industry of Queensland compete in such an industry with an illegal operation flooding the market that have no overheads and no regulation? Uber is a multinational that encourages people to break the law by recruiting people to drive without a taxi licence and offering free introductory rides worth up to \$45, and booklets for companies to use their service which would of had once used the legal taxi service. This in itself is a form of criminal activity, as stated in the Infrastructure Planning and Natural Resources committee meeting hearing on Wednesday 14th October 2015.

I find it absolutely offensive that the Queensland Government has let this multinational company operate illegally in the Queensland market. A multinational company who's main aim is to decimate the taxi industry and that the government is supporting this by not enforcing the laws. Travis Kalanick, the CEO of Uber clearly states that his main aim is to decimate the taxi industry world wide.

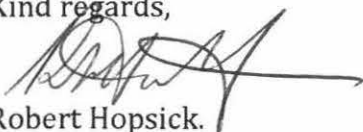
As it is common knowledge that no one who operates a uber in Queensland has a taxi licence, I want to know where do owners, operators and drivers stand when the government cannot uphold the laws of the government that the government make? I heard Jackie Trad on 612 ABC in an interview with Steve Austin state that there was no grey area, that uber were operating illegally in Queensland, as you need a taxi licence to operate a taxi in Queensland. So I am asking this, why is the government doing nothing?

Since being in the legal taxi industry for 46 years I can tell you if uber is not stopped immediately, in the next few months the taxi companies will not be able to keep up with the lease money, nor will the owner operators be able to pay their expenses, and drivers will not be making any money, therefore the taxi industry will be finished. Jim Varghese stated at the end of his interview with Emma Griffith, that while the review was in place the Qld Government still needs to uphold the law.

Continuing with the compliance strategy (fining) which isn't working as stated and confirmed in the committee hearing, I strongly believe that taking away demerit points, increasing fines or even fining passengers, and 6 month car confiscation needs to happen to deter uber drivers. They are breaking our law, just like driving unlicensed and speeding is also breaking our law. I agree with Robbie Katter that there is a big role for the police to uphold the law by issuing demerit points to uber drivers, just like they currently do for drivers using mobile phones.

So I am pleading with you to do something now to keep the Qld Taxi service in operation in all cities and towns throughout Qld. Our Qld taxi industry is regarded as one of the leading taxi services in the world.

Thankyou for taking the time to read my letter,
Kind regards,


Robert Hopsick.

On a finishing note, I would just like to inform you that Nola Curetti, the Acting Director of Taxi and Limousines for Qld Transport, does not appear to know enough information about the taxi service industry in Qld to be doing that job. She couldn't even answer how the taxi industry is regulated in Queensland at the committee hearing.