

Submission for: Research Director  
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament House  
George st  
Brisbane

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**Subject: The Transport legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015**

I am writing in support of the proposed changes outlined in Member for Mt Isa., Mr Rob Katter, Private Member's Bill, The Transport legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

As an owner of a Taxi Service License on the Gold Coast, I have severe concerns regarding the rapid expansion of "App" based commercial transport providers. Uber entered the Queensland market in 2014 and despite being issued with a notice of "Cease and Desist", they have carried on in a manner which suggests they have no respect for regulations or laws of countries, states and cities they want to enter.

I understand the Queensland Government has issued fines to Uber drivers totalling approx \$1.7m and that the majority of these have been paid which in itself suggests an admission of breaking the law. However, Uber pay these fines on behalf of the drivers, thus negating any deterrent for local drivers to cease operating.

In seeking your support for the proposed changes, I provide the following comments:

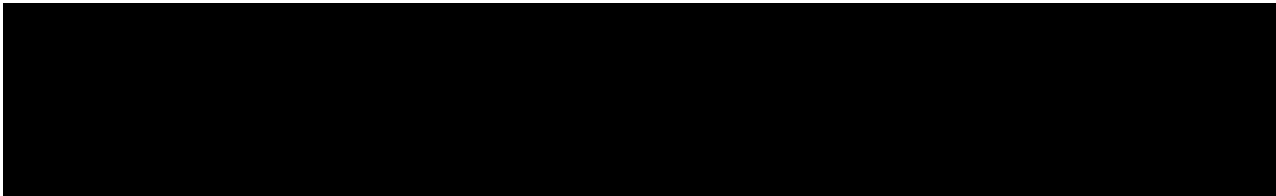
- Uber is financed by some very big players in the International market place (Goldman Sachs and Google). They have a very strong Public Relations machine which constantly seeks to denigrate the local taxi industry, whilst at the same giving the impression of Uber being an innovator.

However, if we examine the facts, a different truth will be revealed. Uber states its App technology was its point of difference but this simply is not true. Gold Coast Cabs and a number of other Qld Taxi Companies had introduced App based technology for booking a taxi more than 12 months before Uber arrived.



- The regulations around safety which exist in Queensland did not come about because any particular party thought that would be a good idea to impose across the industry. Instead, issues such as cameras, GPS, Vehicle inspections, vehicle age, comprehensive and ongoing driver background checks have evolved to ensure safety is paramount in public transport.

- A taxi vehicle has a maximum age of 6 years. Uber operate with a maximum of 10 years. This has now resulted in the ridiculous situation that retiring taxi vehicles have been purchased by drivers to go and work for Uber. In other words the public are being transported in a vehicle deemed no longer suitable for Taxi services but perfectly OK for Uber.
- GPS. Taxis are monitored via GPS 24 hours a day. Uber drivers need only turn off their phone to disappear off the system.



- Members of the Public with disabilities. The Queensland Taxi Industry can be extremely proud of its wheelchair accessible fleet and the professionally trained drivers behind the wheel. Uber have no service available for members of the community with disabilities.

#### Summary

Uber have no respect for laws or regulations and you need look no further than their current approach to not collecting GST and their attempt to bully the ATO. They consider their business model is based on new technology and current laws do not apply. Yet there is nothing in there model which is new to the industry. Mobile phone apps were already being used by Taxi companies, though with the added security of trained drivers, cameras and full time GPS.

In effect what Uber have done, is move in and provide a service which cherry picks all the low hanging fruit and has no interest in the rest. They do not have an offer for the disabled and they operate completely outside the licensing system. The parallel of what is happening to our Industry is like someone setting up an unlicensed street stall to sell alcohol beverages outside of a licensed hotel premises. Without the cost of a license and other regulatory costs, I have no doubt the product would be cheaper than the hotel and popular with consumers but surely no one could consider this to be a level playing field or representative of how business should be conducted in an advanced economy.

A “Cease and Desist” order is in place, though Uber refuse to acknowledge it. The current system of fining drivers is not having the desired impact as the costs are being met by Uber, a multinational company. Demerit points would be driver specific and should help achieve what was originally intended through monetary fines.

Finally, I draw the committee’s attention to the fact that when entering the taxi business, I purchased a license to operate a taxi and the Queensland Government was the beneficiary of the funds from the transaction. Should it now be the intention of the Government to allow competitors to operate without the same overheads which are incurred by the taxi industry, then I would expect appropriate compensation for the loss in value to existing licenses.

Should the committee require any additional information I can be contacted on



Peter Doran

