

20th October 2015

I am writing in support of the private member's Bill, the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, presented by the Member for Mount Isa, Mr Rob Katter MP, on 16 September 2015.

My wife and I are currently facing the prospect of losing our entire livelihood. I am a 62 year old taxi driver who has driven taxis from the day I arrived in Australia in 1991 following suffering which resulted from the Tiananmen Square Protests. On arrival in Australia, due to both an English disadvantage and stringent requirement for re-skilling that I could not afford as a refugee, I found an industry that would allow me to begin working immediately. Over the years, as the Queensland Government has increased the requirements of regulations, I have undertaken the necessary training and development to allow me to comply with these standards. My wife, Mary, who is 60 years of age, also faced similar difficulties. She has been able to undertake only medial work, rearing our only son and together, we continue to fully support her mother who is now frail and elderly at

71

After many years of driving in the industry, we finally raised enough funds to purchase our first investment, a taxi licence in 2012. This purchase would mean that I could continue to work past the minimum requirement age of 65 years and when I was no longer able to do this, I could lease the licence out to supply us with an income – our superannuation. This licence has cost us \$450,000 which we have mortgaged our house on. Purchasing this licence was a considered decision to purchase our safety net for our retirement – a decision we made with advice from financial advisors and the Government knowing that this industry is highly regulated by the Queensland Government. Our licence was originally provided by a tender from the Queensland Government; the very same Government that sets the requirements and the standards to allow a taxi to run in Queensland and provide a taxi service.

We purchased a legal, regulated taxi in Queensland.

We are now facing extreme financial difficulty. While I drive 12 hour shifts, 7 days per week, I struggle to find drivers who will also drive my taxi to cover the remaining shifts. This means that I am not making the minimal wages that a taxi licence is expected to bring in. This also means that I am struggling to cover the costs of the taxi with a heavily reduced income. We have reported around a 40% reduction in income in the last 12 months. I am looking at the prospect of being unable to pay the bank my mortgage, losing my home and bankruptcy. I will need to consider compensation – otherwise we will not survive due to the inaction by the Government with illegal taxis.

The losses and suffering I have suffered has been experienced by all of my fellow taxi licence owners and drivers.

During the time my small business has been suffering, an illegal taxi service has grown at an uncontrolled rate in Queensland. We now share the limited public taxi service market with many unregistered, unlicensed, unsecure (by Queensland Government-set standards) illegal taxis.

The objective of the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015 to increase certain penalties in the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 to deter illegal taxi operators is the first measure I have seen that will help to restore some certainty in the value of taxis in Queensland. By providing recording demerit points against the traffic history of a person who provides a taxi service without a taxi service licence or a peak demand taxi permit it will be difficult for illegal taxi drivers to continue to function without facing the same costs and regulations that LEGAL taxis in Queensland face.


My legal taxi licence has a value set by the Queensland Government. I abide by every regulation and standard set by the very same. I also pay GST and taxes which help to build my state and country. If I fail to comply with all of these standards, I will be punished and my taxi is not allowed to operate.

It is the law.

The Government must enforce the laws they set.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wang


Xiu Ping Wang