

15 October 2015

Research Director

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

Parliament House

George Street

Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Research Director,

RE: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

I hereby submit my support for the proposed amendment bill and present the case following why the government should pass the proposed bill and ask that you personally support it.

My History

I am 66 years old and been associated with the taxi industry for 45 years in NSW and QLD.. I started driving a taxi in 1970 full time for 10 years then part time there after eventually buying my own licence. I have been paying off the loan for many years with a view to driving the taxi 3 days a week in semiretirement and eventually selling the licence to boost my superannuation enough for a comfortable self-funded retirement thus putting no burden on the aged pension.

Effect on my life and family

The current situation with the calculated attack on the taxi industry in Queensland particularly by the illegal taxi service Uber has put my plans in jeopardy, creating a very stressful situation for my family as it seems that although it is an illegal operation, nothing seems to be happening to prevent it. After years of sacrifice to pay off the taxi, the government's lack of action has allowed the value of my business to be whittled away to nothing and it seems now in retirement I will need to resort to the age pension.

No support

It seems as though the government is not supporting the legal taxi industry at all and worst still it seems like it is supporting an illegal operation. This surprises me because to my understanding the legal taxi industry earns a considerable amount of tax for the government, funding in licencing fees, boosts direct employment as one of the largest private employers plus thousands of associated workers in related industries to service the taxi industry. This is opposed to Uber as their money goes directly overseas with no benefit to Australia.

Costs to achieve safety and service

The Government obviously recognises that there are costs associated with achieving a safe and legal service or it wouldn't take these costs into consideration when setting the fare structure for legal taxi operation. The Uber situation appears trendy to the younger generation as it seems like a new service however the legal taxi industry has offered the same type of services for years but with the added advantages of security, safety and performance guarantees. The only difference is that the legal taxi industry has to cover the cost of security cameras, security rank monitoring, regular vehicle safety checks, limited age restrictions on vehicles, comprehensive driver training, full insurances, fully qualified drivers with taxi driver licences and many more costs not covered by Uber. The Queensland government sets the fares for the legal taxi industry which are based on a fair deal for taxi owners, drivers and the public taking into consideration the costs of operating a legal and safe service

Threat to the public – Drug and Alcohol

Taxi drivers are required by law to have a zero tolerance to drugs and alcohol whereas Uber drivers have the same limits as the general public (.05) and even if booked they can carry on driving passengers until their licence is suspended or cancelled. I'm sure I wouldn't want my children riding with their friends if they had a drink driving charge and that's the risk they take when using Uber.

A proud industry

Taxi drivers show that they are proud representatives of the industry by wearing their uniform to show who they are compared to Uber who hide behind the anonymity of illegality.

A false veil of competition

Some say that we need competition in the industry but in fact there are already several legal taxi services operating in Queensland and many hire car and limousine businesses .

One Law for all

Any other illegal activity on the road is punished with demerit points so why doesn't this apply to Uber? When the law is not applied fairly to all citizens it raises concerns of impropriety. The taxi industry has always been a great employer of hard working people wanting to get ahead and not be a burden on the public funds. There are many reasons why the Government should support the taxi industry by approving this bill. I implore you not to allow a foreign national company to ruin one of the best service industries in Australia and show your commitment to the law by passing this proposed bill.

There are many requirements for legal taxis to satisfy, and following is a table showing just some of the differences between the legal and illegal services (to my knowledge)

LEGAL TAXI SERVICE	ILLEGAL TAXI --- UBER
Driver taxi licence required	Normal drivers licence only
Professional driver training required	No training
Uniform required proudly worn by drivers	No dress code
Age limit on taxi vehicle	No age limit on vehicles
Regular vehicle inspections	No inspections required
Security camera	No security camera
Personal safety alarm	No personal safety alarm
Rules of conduct enforced	No rules of conduct enforced
Taxi rank inspectors	No policing of the rules
Taxis subject to random transport inspections	No inspections
Taxi industry must maintain levels of service for disabled passengers providing wheel chair friendly vehicles	No requirement for this service
Taxis have constant radio contact with base in case of emergency	Use mobile phones only
Taxis have signage letting other road users know they are a serious service provider	Uber hides it's illegal service with no signage
Taxis must get Qld Transport Operator Accreditation annually	Uber needs no accreditation
Taxis have to have in place several commercial type insurance policies	Uber do not hold these policies and rely on their self insured practice
Taxis always act within the restraints of the law	Uber knowingly act illegally and flaunt the law by openly admitting that they pay their drivers fines

Yours Faithfully

