

**From:** [Carmel Sandona](#)  
**To:** [Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee](#)  
**Subject:** Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015  
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As the review committee is looking into the KAP proposed Transport Amendment bill, I seek the committee's support in making the necessary legislative changes to control the operations of ride sharing operators such as uber – and anyone else who operates a taxi illegally in Queensland.

I have been in the Taxi industry just over 8 years and have personally invested heavily in the setting up and running of this business. It had given me the hope to see my investment grow in order to fund my superannuation for my retirement years. I can't see this happening at all now, in fact I believe our livelihood is seriously threatened. Reports show that over the last nine months our revenue is thousands of dollars short compared to this time last year, but our running expenses and legal obligations are still the same. I am finding hard to make ends meet. I have been told that the economy is slow and people are not spending, but I still see crowded shopping centres, restaurants, entertainment parks, etc. I personally believe that Uber is causing a big impact on our industry.

All I'm seeking is that there is enforcement of the law and the implementation of demerit points for drivers who illegally operate outside the legal system and ultimately a level playing field for all players in this form of transport service provided to the community.

I have included the following facts below to show how Uber vs Licenced Taxi Industry has no comparison.

**About the term "rideshare":**

- The sharing economy is a fallacy. No one is sharing, it is merely a business model conducted by individuals for financial reward just like a taxi service.
- Ride-sharing does not exist, there is no sharing. Call it what it is – an illegal taxi service.

**About the Queensland taxi industry:**

- The Queensland taxi industry is made up of over 15,000 small business operators including more than 2,800 private owners, many of which are 'Mum and Dad' owners or retirees, who have invested their life savings into a taxi licence.
- In comparison, outlaw taxi company uber is a massive foreign company that does not pay tax in Australia and sends its profits off-shore.

**Legislation:**

- Taxi booking companies are required by legislation to: 1) provide high quality customer service, 2) service all areas and regions and 3) protect customers. Illegal taxi services guarantee none of these.
- There are currently no implications on illegal taxis for failing to provide a 24 hour / 365 day

service or for refusing a reasonable hiring because they do not conform to regulation. Why should they be able to get away with this?

- Unregulated apps and illegal taxi services do not comply with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (“DSAPT”).
- How is it that the existing industry is expected to abide by the rule of law and illegal taxis are not?
- Would it be appropriate to set up an illegal liquor store at the front door of an existing nightclub, or a butcher to apply his skills to the general population as a “surgeon”? Clearly not, yet this is exactly what illegal taxi services are doing.

#### **Service guarantee:**

- Unregulated apps and illegal taxi services discriminate by only allowing passengers who have a smart phone and a credit card.
- They take no responsibility for a job failing to be executed and clearly are only interested in cherry-picking the “cream”.
- They encourage withholding service to create fake under-supply to justify “surge pricing”.
- They are happy to distort the market and generate mini market failures to charge more.

#### **Illegality and bullying by foreign company:**

- Uber has been given a “Cease and Desist” order by the Queensland Government but believes it is above the law and refuses to abide.
- The actions of illegal taxi providers are little more than bullying because they are confident that if challenged legally they have more money to defend their actions.
- They work on the mantra that “might is right” – if they have enough funds they should be allowed to do anything they choose.
- Uber have an outdated, “top down” business model that is not flexible enough to adapt to different environments where the regulations reflect community needs.

#### **Safety:**

- Illegal taxi services do not conform to any government regulation that protects Queenslanders.
- The current regulation is sensible and safety-based. It is sensible to have cameras in taxis to protect the public. It is sensible to have GPS monitoring that is not limited just to a smart phone that can be turned off. It is sensible to have daily criminal checks for drivers.
- Only taxis meet government regulations designed to protect the safety of customers.
- Drivers associated with illegal taxis are not required to undergo any training. Neither do they

have daily criminal checks.

- Illegal taxis will not be covered by insurance, irrespective of their claims.
- Illegal taxi drivers can turn off their phone, and no one will know where they are. This is NOT GPS monitoring. Taxis have three separate forms of GPS monitoring.
- Illegal taxis are not obliged to have any maintenance checks. Even if they claim to, how can this be proven?

**Fares:**

- Taxi fares are guaranteed to never go above the metered rates. Illegal taxi services will charge you up to 10 x the normal rate (or more) in busy times – known as “surge pricing”. This is a rip-off.

**Competition:**

- The taxi industry WELCOMES competition. But not at the expense of customer safety. If illegal taxis meet regulations they are welcome.

**Taxi licences:**

- Taxi licences are an investment and those who have purchased one or more – mostly everyday people investing into their future - should not be disadvantaged.
- Those who claim taxi licences in Queensland are driving up fares are wrong. In Queensland, the Government only issues taxi licences when needed. The 3,264 licences currently in the state do not provide the Government with revenue, so talk about the Government making money from licence sales is false.
- In Queensland, taxi licence fees have no bearing on taxi fares. Fares are set with reference to operating costs only.

Finally I believe uber have no intention to comply with the existing standards required by Queensland or Australian law. They expect to come to this country and dictate to Australian governments how the law has to be changed to suit their requirements, not the community's needs. Laws are made by the peoples' representatives in the interests of the community, not to suit a huge American corporation like uber, or for that matter any other individual or entity. Why should any government abdicate their legal, moral and societal responsibilities and make laws to suit any individual, simply because uber claim to be something special? Uber can operate legally if it chooses; it simply opts not to because to do so will eliminate the competitive advantages it has derived by ignoring the laws of Queensland and Australia.

Please take into consideration all the above points and see the impact Uber is having on our current industry and hope that you place this matter in high priority.

Yours sincerely,

Carmel Sandona