

Research Director
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

20th October 2015

Dear Chair

Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

Since 1986 my wife and I have been involved in the Taxi Industry and have invested heavily both with effort and financially on the Gold Coast.

We started in 1986 with 1 taxi which we purchased along with shares in Regent Taxi Ltd and both my wife and I drove after attending and completing Regent Taxis' Driver Training Program and completing the industry required Queensland Police Service (QPS) criminal history check.

As parents of four daughters these training requirements made us more aware of the checks that go into the issuing of licences for taxi drivers and our daughters have been confident frequent users because of this safety aspect.

As the years have passed my wife and I have increased our holdings in the Taxi Industry by reinvesting our profits back into the Industry building a family business which two of our daughters manage and operate allowing us to be self-funded retirees.

The Department of Main Roads and Transport (DTMR) are very clear on the regulations by which we operate under. We are required to follow these regulations and ensure those affiliated to us also adhere to the laws regardless of the associated costs. The latest regulations that we are to implement is an upgrade to our existing camera system whereby voice recordings are now required at a further cost to the owners of around \$3,000 to \$4,000.

At no time during our 30 years in this industry would it be, or would you, consider that if operating outside these regulations would your business not suffer or fail to exist. In your Committee hearing with the DTMR it was clearly stated the disregard for the state laws as well as the little impact the financial penalties have placed on Uber's illegal operations. What was further obvious was that DTMR's existing enforcement efforts, although limited, are not targeting the Driver's committing the offences as Uber continue to administrate and finance the payment of DTMR infringements.

Uber state Manager Mr. Mike Abbott stated in an ABC radio interview that they did not believe that anyone should be penalized and that they stand by their Driver Partners actions and would pay for issued infringement. Mr. Abbott then went on to comment about the blocking of DTMR officers by Uber.

It has also been brought to our attention that Uber pay a pittance in tax and send their earnings off shore with no GST payments been made. Again another cost to the industry we pay as part of operating a business in Queensland.

Uber, and its Driver Partners, have not correctly insured their vehicles. The Taxi Industry has huge CTP insurance costs as well as commercial insurances such as Public Liability and Personal Accident Insurance (for Drivers). Under the existing legislation penalties can be applied to Uber Driver Partners for incorrectly insured vehicles in accordance with the "Motor Accident Insurance Act 1994" however to date DTMR and the QPS are not willing it issue these infringements which in our opinion have a significant public safety risk.

Our licences were purchased from the Queensland Government in a fully regulated industry which has continued to adopt further legislation to ensure passenger safety and yet now the Government seem to be carrying out little enforcement and engaging in support from the QPS.

How can other businesses be assured that this won't happen to them, if you as a government are not willing to continue to uphold the law.

We call on the Queensland Parliament to pass this tabled Bill of appointing demerit points to fines as well as ensuring that the law enforcers uphold the laws of our State.

Regards

Peter & Jennifer Smith
Director
Animeer Pty Ltd trading as Professional Taxis Gold Coast