

20<sup>th</sup> October 2015

### **Submission on behalf of Allan and Sharyn Stirling.**

We would like to submit our reasons for the necessity of this proposed bill being passed as we are extremely concerned re our future in the Queensland Taxi Industry. We entered the Taxi Industry full time in 1985 following the S.E.Q.E.B. dispute and the subsequent loss of employment due to same. We purchased our taxi licence with the full intention of having a secure income, by working our own taxi, a job we did 7 days a week until my recent retirement.

We wanted to secure our future by not only buying a job for ourselves but also a business which would provide for our family and to also provide us with an income in retirement to avoid being dependent on Government assistance. When we bought our licence, we did so in good faith.

We worked extremely hard and long hours making many sacrifices along the way. There were no family holidays and Public holidays including Christmas Day were spent working to get ahead because at the time we were paying 19.9% interest on our loan.

The emergence of this illegal taxi services has created enormous stress leaving us in a state of limbo and uncertainty re our future income and our inability to sell our Licence if we so desired because of Government inaction re this illegal service.

Successive Governments have issued Taxi Licences in ratio to the population and have enforced strict regulations and fare structures. This is the reason we invested in a Government regulated small business to provide security for our family and a future for ourselves.

Our overheads over the years have included Rego which is now \$7000 plus, Insurance \$6500 plus there has also been ongoing rising costs for;

- Radio fees
- Government licence fees
- Government accreditation fees
- 6 monthly transport inspections
- Marshalls to supervise busy taxi ranks

There have also been ongoing costs for replacement vehicles, painting and installation of equipment and installation of security cameras and other updated security. Adding insult to injury our notices for payment come with a threat that our taxi will be suspended or cancelled if we do not pay by the due date on the first and final notice.

We have also contributed by diligently paying our taxes.

This illegal taxi service has none of these costs imposed on them.

This illegal taxi service is taking away work from a legal Government regulated service and is thus stealing incomes from honest legal Taxi drivers.

This illegal taxi service is making it extremely difficult for legal taxis to compete as they are not paying these high overheads.

This illegal taxi service is creating extreme stress which is causing sleepless nights re concern for our financial future and is also exacerbating our health problems.

This illegal taxi service does not have a zero alcohol imposed upon them as does the regulated legal Taxi industry.

The high overheads for legal Taxis mean the cars need to be working long hours to cover these costs therefore they can't afford to have work taken away by an illegal UBER taxi service.

The wheelchair bound people in our community rely on Maxi Taxis for transport but Maxi Taxis also rely on other work to be financially viable. This work is being taken away by an illegal taxi service. The Queensland Premier stated on the 5P.M Channel 10 news "This Government is always concerned when people's livelihood is at stake."

If she is genuine in regards to this statement then this Government should ensure that this Bill is passed to protect the legal Taxi Industry.

If a "level playing field" (as stated by the Deputy Premier on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October at a rally at Parliament House), is to exist then Taxi Licence holders need to be compensated at full market value for their Licences.

If this illegal operation is allowed to continue and erode all our hard work and diminish the value of our licence then we will have to alternative than to join other owners in a class action against the government to recover the cost of our licence and the pain and suffering caused by the inaction of the government to halt this illegal taxi service.

We firmly believe that it is impossible for Taxis to co-exist with an illegal taxi service unless the Government buys back large numbers or all Taxi Licences

Taxis high overheads force operators to work therefore the public get a consistent service. Comparatively, illegal taxi drivers will only work if and when it suits them, cherry-picking the best hours to work.

For me and my peers the loss of value from our licences and the loss of income will have widespread consequences:

- Lessee's will have their leases handed in
- Self funded retirees will become pensioners instead of self-funded retirees
- There will be an overload of unemployed taxi drivers who will not resort to an unregulated industry that is both unsafe and insecure

The introduction of demerit points will help our industry marginally. Currently we are suffering due to the constantly growing number of illegal taxi drivers who have nothing to lose by undertaking these illegal taxi services. The introduction of demerit points will give these participants a deterrent – losing demerit points can affect other facets of their lives – hopefully making them think twice about driving for an illegal taxi service.

In the interest of applying the law equitably and fairly for all Queenslanders – a trait that underlies our democracy – we ask you to support of the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.



**Allan and Sharyn Stirling**