

From: [Bruce](#)
To: [Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to support the Bill to Increase certain penalties in the Transport Operations Act 1994
Date: Wednesday, 21 October 2015 5:05:36 PM

21st October 2015

SUBMISSION TO SUPPORT THE BILL TO INCREASE CERTAIN PENALTIES IN THE TRANSPORT OPERATIONS ACT 1994

My wife and I are currently the holders of a Taxi Licence under Lease to a very successful operator in Blue & White Taxis Gladstone, Qld. The Taxi Licence forms part of our Self Funded Superannuation Scheme and is a very important part of our annual income. Should this huge American Uber "ride sharing" services company be allowed to continue to erode our Taxi Industry then not only will we suffer personally, but the Industry as a whole will suffer huge ramifications.

The Taxi Industry in Queensland is regulated to control the operations of taxis and has operated successfully for many years under the auspices of the Queensland Government and the Taxi Council. The quality of the vehicles, insurance on our passengers and drivers, the licence to drive a vehicle carrying fare paying passengers, safety precautions within the taxi itself guarantee a safe efficient operation for our passengers. They can ride with a free mind knowing that our drivers are trained and licensed and in most cases in uniform and are connected to a base station operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

We have been connected with the Australian Taxi Industry for around 40 years and have seen many changes, most of which have been an enhancement for our operations. So many people rely on our industry for an income and to allow a company such as Uber to "thumb their noses" at all regulations is completely absurd and must be stopped forthwith. Most people in business accept that competition is good for business and keeps operators on their toes. This only applies when a level playing field is reached.

Our taxi operators pay very high fees to remain legal in the eyes of our government departments and in the eyes of our police department. Uber states that they are a "ride share" service which is only spin for their way of saying "we operate a taxi service". If a driver accepts money directly or indirectly from a passenger to pay for a journey from point to point then this becomes a taxi service. If that driver does not hold a current Taxi Licence allowing him or her to legally carry passengers for fares then he/she is breaking the law every time they have a fare paying passenger in their car. Queensland Transport Inspectors and Queensland Police are able to stop these vehicles at any time whether they have passengers in or not. They are entitled to ask for the driver's licence and any other forms of identification they may require of a licensed passenger vehicle. If said driver cannot produce these documents then they are automatically operating outside the law as we know it and should be breached on the spot with fines and demerit points applying each time these documents cannot be produced. This can happen right now and should be. Sooner or later Uber and their drivers will either run out of money or run out of demerit points. One fails to understand why this is not being done at this point. At the same time Queensland Transport inspectors are able to carry out an inspection of the vehicle being used to check that it complies with all regulations currently applying to the Taxi Industry. The vehicle could be put off the road immediately if the check is not satisfactory.

We all know the extent of the safety equipment carried in our taxis and the cost of that equipment and maintenance together with the ongoing costs to keep a taxi on the road.

Uber does none of this. In the event of a serious road accident an injured passenger in an Uber vehicle has no come back on any insurance and would have to sue the driver which we feel sure would be a waste of time.

Interestingly all taxi drivers must operate on a zero tolerance involving alcohol and drugs. Uber drivers on a regular car drivers licence operate on a .05 alcohol level which again throws out the idea of a level playing field. It is a disgrace that anybody should be able to drive public passenger vehicles after having consumed alcohol or drugs.

Our Taxi Industry throughout Australia is regulated to ensure safety for our passengers. The cabs are reliable, drivers are friendly and trained in public relations.....Uber has no contact with their passengers or with their drivers in the event of an emergency. There is no access to Uber should a passenger wish to file a complaint or discuss a problem with the company.

Should the Queensland Government not act on this very serious problem confronting our Industry before August 2016, then Uber has a further 10 months to grow stronger and continue to operate an illegal taxi service. With respect, we ask that the penalties currently available for use in illegal taxi operations be implemented immediately. We further ask that our Government protect our Industry and all those working in and around it relying on their taxi driving for a living.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Gay Burnham, owner of Taxi Licence [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]