

Please accept this as my submission in support of the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

The current situation with illegal taxis and the company facilitating their activity is clearly not on a level playing field. There definitely are no requirements they have to meet regarding the standard, integrity of the driver and they can use any reasonable vehicle, do not have any requirements regarding the suitability of an approved [by the Government of the day] vehicle there-by holding the appropriate insurance cover as required in the event of any accident etc. There are no fees for night security especially on busy city and valley ranks of an evening. Recently we paid to Queensland Transport \$1,869:75 (5 licenses) as an annual fee for night security to ensure the **orderly conduct of passengers** waiting on taxi ranks during the evening; these illegal taxi operators and the company facilitating them doesn't contribute to this, they can still capitalise on this service.

If these illegal taxis are permitted to continue their operations, a virtue of the inaction by the Queensland State Government to uphold their very own regulations, other fly by night operators will just put their cars on the road, without any checks and balances being conducted and passengers will be totally vulnerable to any driver in any vehicle.

The statement by the Deputy Premier announcing a review and setting a decision to be made by November 2016, will destroy the industry if nothing is done to control the current situation in the lead up. We have witnessed great and progressive countries such as Germany totally banning the very same company and their illegal operations. Yet our Queensland Government who has implicitly designed and upheld the regulations of the industry is not reticent to uphold these very same regulations.

In the current climate illegal taxi drivers are being fined, however this is not serving as a deterrent. It is public knowledge that the company facilitating the illegal drivers has paid these fines in some cases and in others, is appealing the fines. Meanwhile the illegal operators continue increasing. The proposition provided by this Bill will act as a deterrent as it is a personal and irremovable repercussion for offenders. The drivers cannot drive an illegal taxi once suspended and it can take some considerable time to obtain a new licence.

I am extremely concerned. I started driving taxis in 1986, had to undertake a 1 week course before I could drive a taxi and had to sit for and pass an examination confirming I knew my way around Brisbane. Other requirement pertinent to the industry ie experience in handling a vehicle by physically driving an examiner to and from an appointed address to name only a couple, have increased dramatically over time. This has been at the request of and enforcement by the Queensland State Government. My licence had to be clear of any wrong-doing and it was essential that there was a set period that that had to be clear of any traffic violations.

I later bought our first taxi December 1987 and this was settled January 1988. We later applied through a tender system undertaken by the Queensland Government for an additional licence (this required a mortgage against our home) and this did require brand new approved vehicle and equipment to be supplied. This was the career path chosen to allow me to support myself and my growing family. Later we obtained a Wheelchair accessible licence by yet another tender; we lease this licence which supports yet more young Queenslanders in a job. My father later passed on and I purchased his taxi licence from the estate. In all I was running 3 cars and had 2 leased out.



**This is meant to be our retirement plan.** My entire family and I are self sufficient and we do not take advantage of any government benefits or health coverage. At one stage we had a very high mortgage and still am repaying this back. This was our security and had planned this as an asset for our Grand Children.

Now I see this being greatly impacted on due entirely by the State government of the day **not** taking any form or restricting these illegal taxis from operating.

Our concern is these illegal operators do not have anywhere near the costs imposed on them that we have on each and every licence we presently own. This is not a level playing field. A level playing field can only be created if the illegal operators abide by the same State regulations and consequential costs. The only other alternative is for the Queensland State Government to compensate every legislated taxi licence and they can impose a deregulated industry – that is what is happening by stealth.

My licences have already been evaluated at 50% of their worth as a direct consequence of this turn of events. The Queensland State Government's inaction on an industry they have set makes them culpable for this loss.

**I call on the Queensland Government to uphold their own regulations that they impose on Queensland taxis.**

I strongly support the proposal set out in the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

*John North 21st October 2015*

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