

From: [Scott and Ellen Gist](#)
To: [Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee](#)
Subject: Illegal Taxi Bill
Date: Wednesday, 21 October 2015 9:16:16 PM

To the Committee

My name is Scott Gist and am a young married man with two young children. I am a second generation taxi operator and driver living in Brisbane. My father entered the taxi industry in 1974 and he worked 18 hour days six and seven days a week. As a young child, my introduction to the industry was cleaning the taxi on a Sunday morning.

Later in life, I commenced driving taxis part time as a means of funding my tertiary education in Economics. I enjoyed driving the cab enough to submit a tender for a taxi licence as part of the Queensland Government tender process in September 1998. The Queensland Government set the rules for the tender and accepted the highest four bids. Luckily I was number four.

Since September 1998, the taxi industry has evolved, both under its own will to improve and meet customer expectations but also to meet growing and tightening demands set by the Queensland Government. The next decade saw many changes including:

- Computer dispatch from 1991 including driver distress alarms back to a 24 hr base;
- Booking service contracts requiring minimum service levels throughout each 24 hour period including the service delivery to passengers with disabilities and special needs from 1994;
- Implementation of EFTPOS in 2002;
- Implementation of taxi security cameras in 2006;
- SMS applications in 2007
- tighter restrictions on the issue of driver authorisation with minimum waiting periods, including category A, B and C offences in 2007;
- raised fleet numbers for the sight impaired in 2007;
- booking office computer system upgrades to include smart phone application in 2008 and live tracking of vehicles;
- automated meters in 2013;
- upgrade of security cameras to include audio in 2015.

During my time in the taxi industry I have driven taxis, owned taxis, operated taxis, Chaired Townsville Taxi Board of Directors from 2007 – 2013 and advocated for the taxi industry and its customers during my tenure with the peak body, Taxi Council Qld.

The industry is not subsidised and provides a strong regulatory framework for over 3200 individual families to invest, draw a wage and employ drivers, call centre staff, mechanics, panel beaters and computer suppliers. We do this because the Queensland Government established a framework in 1960 when the Transport Act 1960 was enacted which was later further robusted with the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994, Transport Operations (Passenger Transport (Regulations) and Road Use Management Act 1995.

The financial industry has also supported the framework put together by the Queensland Government and has financed taxi owners to purchase their licence which was issued by the

Queensland Government and later resold in the market place.

Small Queensland families like mine have worked tirelessly over decades to save money, purchase the licence from the Government, paid our taxes and later our GST, employed drivers and met every single piece of government regulation asked of us. I have reinvested all of the profit earned from the taxi industry back into the industry to fund replacement vehicles, pay for repairs, pay for the government fees and of course the licence itself.

The taxi fare cost index which was introduced in 1999 has worked well over the years as a means of reviewing the cost of running a taxi and allowing for upward movements in our fares. It must be noted and understood that the market value of a taxi licence has never been used in the taxi fare cost index and hence has no bearing on the value of taxi fares. This must be understood.

Prior to 1994, taxis didn't have to be part of a 24 hour taxi booking office and hence there was no guarantee a customer would get a taxi in off peak times like Monday mornings at 2am.

The current structure recognised decades ago that personal transport services could not be performed without government intervention given the need for a reliable and safe transport service for people wanting to move around their city or a foreign city with the confidence of getting a properly accredited driver, in a properly accredited and licensed vehicle. This includes abled body and special needs passengers.

I am asking the committee to have faith in an industry which is run by mums and dads like me, who work hard, reinvest in our local economy, pay taxes locally and who do as is asked from Government.

The current situation of allowing illegal taxi companies and illegal taxi drivers to steal from the mouths of our children is simply wrong. For Jackie Trad to say "we have fined them but that hasn't stopped them is ridiculous. This is essentially saying given they have billions of dollars, we will allow them to bankrupt small business owners like myself. Small business owners who had faith in a regulatory system setup by government over many decades which works well and costs the government nothing.

I ask that you support the KAP Bill and stop the multinational companies from bulldozing small business people like myself. It simply isn't fair and I owe quite a lot of money to my bank, which if government doesn't support our industry,, our industry will face many foreclosures, bankruptcies, employment loss, tax revenue loss and homelessness. This is not an exaggeration – we have invested and supported our industry and have used loans to acquire taxi plates from government.

Regards
Scott Gist

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