

**Submission for: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015**

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*An Act to amend the State Penalties Enforcement Act 1999, the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 and the Transport Operations (Road Use Management) Act 1995 to provide for the recording of demerit points against the traffic history of a person who provides a taxi service without a taxi service licence or a peak demand taxi permit.*

*The principal object of the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994 is to achieve the best possible public passenger transport at reasonable cost to community and government while facilitating market entry restrictions in the public interest.*

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Ridesharing apps provide an identical on demand, 24/7 point to point transportation services 52 weeks of the year service as provided by taxis. However they do not operate within the same regulations and should not be granted special leave from the Queensland public passenger transport regulation. Legal taxi services on the other hand have always operated within the law and in doing so have invested a substantial amount of resources into ensuring they comply with all regulations including minimum service levels, safety standards for drivers and customers, and other licensing requirements imposed by government.

Uber and other Ridesharing apps, as they do not operate within the law, invest their resources instead into mass media campaigns and have managed through their effective media trolling to build a distorted brand image. Taxis have always met and in most cases exceeded minimum standards required by Queensland Government and their taxi service agreement, and consistently support the need for raising these standards to provide a more efficient and safer transportation experience for customers.

I am aware that safety standards include security cameras in taxis, driver fatigue management and the requirement of drivers have appropriate authorisations and to participate in ongoing driver development. These are in place to protect both the customer and the driver.

I like to look at this situation from a difference perspective. I am a recent graduate from university and have taken the first steps in becoming a professional within the accounting industry in Australia. I have never received any sort of government benefits or allowances in my lifetime, nor do I expect to receive any. The Australian government currently have laws which regulate the professional standards of accountants. My employer and I will invest heavily in professional training to ensure that I am a qualified accountant as the public will rely on my professional advice. Although this is entirely a different industry to that of the taxi industry, the concept still applies. Taxi drivers and other industry participants (e.g. owners, taxi managers, operators etc.) should invest in attaining appropriate accreditation as the public rely on the service provided by them. It is concerning to see the government allow unaccredited individuals make profits at the expense of law abiding, accredited industry participants.

The government surely wouldn't ever allow the emergence of a similar illegal operating competitor in an industry such as accounting or finance, or even in an industry such as food and alcohol services. There needs to be some level of protection for the current taxi industry as it stands.

After Uber being issued a cease and desist order by Queensland Transport, and both Uber and its users clearly ignoring this, it is clear that a stronger message must be sent to those participating in illegal ridesharing activities. I support the Queensland Government in voting in favour for the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015. The taxi industry in 2009 comprised of more than 3,000 taxi licenses valued at more than \$1.4 billion dollars, and these figures have only risen in recent years. There is a need for the government and its acting bodies to support the taxi industry by encouraging public use of legal taxi-like services and condemning the use of illegal taxi-like services.

Regards

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