

21/10/2015

SUBMISSION

BILL TO INCREASE CERTAIN PENALTIES IN THE TRANSPORT OPERATION ACT 1994.

HEM RAJ SAINI.

It concerns me that there has not been anything mentioned anywhere in the media so far about the impact these changes will have on the public and taxi license holders.

Working in a town like Gladstone, we do feel that public here is not fully aware of how the Taxi industry works. When I talk to passenger during my work, I find that they don't even know that as a operator -we have to buy license which is managed by Government including pricing of fares, licensing etc.

I'm in the favor of reviewing the current system at times to improve the service we provide to our customers. But we also need to review why and how we not going to disturb the current effective structure with a solid base.

I agree we have to be updated with new technology and security features in the taxis and their demand.

But I can't see that Uber has the better one. We as a license holder has to pay a good amount of money to sustain (buying and maintaining) the taxi license whereas UBER is ok using private cars?

By putting the tenders for taxi licenses, I do believe that it help our Government to create more revenue as well as helps the town for more vehicles availability in the controlled environment.

All our taxi drivers in this town are familiar to people where passenger feels safe to travel with them. On the other hand, Uber drivers in their private cars - wouldn't be much convenient for specially women /elderly clients. Safety in those private cars is a concern to me.

If the Government decide to de-regulate the taxi industry what will happen to the service industry has strived to achieve.

What I feel a taxi industry needs the following to provide a quality service in any area:

\*A controlled environment.

\*A roster based system to ensure that there are vehicles on duty during quite times.

\*A base operated call system for those who don't have smart phones.

\*A guaranteed service to our elderly /disabled by direct contact to ensure they are seeing their familiar faces and competent drivers, this gives them a security feeling.

\*Safe and reliable vehicles (well maintained as per rules and regulations of Department of Transport & Main Roads) to provide timely service.

\*Safety for both passenger and driver is paramount.

\*The base operators to manually direct cars to jobs when necessary to ensure the service is delivered in timely manner.

\*IF Uber is allowed to enter the industry without regulations:

Who will control the industry when one of the player is worldwide and faceless?

\*There will be no guarantee of sufficient vehicles availability without a controlled roster.

\*The elderly /disabled will suffer from the suggested changes in the industry as it is easy for them to ring and book the taxi now (most of those clients don't have smartphones or why they have to buy and then learn how to use them anyway).

\*Our Blue & White taxi base, Gladstone is reviewing a new system that allows us to compete with the Uber app feature but still offering a direct contact with customers.

\*No vehicle checks by a third party will certainly will drop the industry's current standards.

\*Government will be no longer putting the tenders on for new vehicles and will be losing that tender money.

\*Uber is based on Smartphone. There is no identification so a driver's friend could easily do the job.

Those who have worked with the industry know how hard it is to get the permanent drivers who knows the area as well.

Why would the Uber be better?

Uber drivers are more likely to be casual drivers which doesn't ensure that the taxi will be guaranteed and the current drivers will probably move to other means of income.

A driver using their own vehicle will find that after deducting Uber commission, fuel, costs, higher insurance, costs of registration etc. they probably will be left with less than 50% they are currently earning to drive for an operator.

\*Currently, as an operator we make sure that the vehicle is on road to meet the roster commitment.

\*As we are opened 365 days of the year, but we do endure this as we have invested into the business.

\*It concerns me not just for us- but the other license holders in Queensland which is an estimated 1.4 billion will disappear from the Queensland balance sheets.

Not a healthy outcome financially for the QLD Government.

\*A large company like Uber will reduce the customer service we strive to maintain because small operators have direct contact with the public and have an investment to protect.

\*At least, we now have controls in place to ensure that they meet current standard.

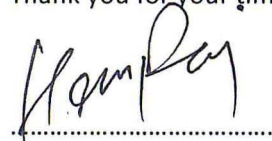
\*Looking to the future:

\*Ensure that system can sustain under pressure and rollover of any changes are minimal to the public.

\*Having an industry that gives confidence that it will be around for a long time to ensure long term employment.

\*An industry that is fair, stable, strong and can endure through change.

Thank you for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hem Raj Saini', written over a horizontal dotted line.

Hem Raj Saini