

To Whom It May Concern:

I wish to present my submission supporting the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) amendment Bill 2015.

The Reason For The Bill

Currently illegal taxi services are bypassing the Queensland taxi industry at the detriment of the public. This threatens the standard and safety of taxi services across the state. Illegal taxi operations erode the viability of the existing taxi licensing scheme administered by the Queensland Government.

The Bills seeks to strengthen enforcement for providers of illegal taxi services as it is clear that the current financial penalties are no longer sufficient in deterring the increase of illegal taxi services in Queensland. This Bill aims to ensure that those delivering a taxi service without a licence are appropriately penalised.

Additional Reasons to pass this Bill are outlined below:

A) If ridesharing apps are to continue the standards and safety of taxi services across the state are threatened because:

*only licenced taxis meet Government regulations designed to protect the safety of customers with regards to the vehicle's maintenance and government compliance checks. Licenced taxis are on the road for a maximum of 6 years with stringent Government checks. **There is no guarantee that rideshare vehicles are mechanically safe as a car can be up to 9 years old, not undergone COI's and are not subject to random inspection for road worthiness.**

*licenced taxi drivers undergo daily criminal checks, rideshare drivers don't. Children with additional needs are transported by licenced taxi drivers to and from their educational facilities. Licenced taxis have additional safety measures in place to protect the passenger, such as a security camera and a 24 hour GPS tracking device.

You don't know who is behind the wheel of a rideshare vehicle and there aren't any safety measures in place to monitor the transportation. A child could be sexually or physically abused and nobody would know because many of these children are unable to adequately communicate their needs and require extra protection. Rideshare drivers can turn their phones off and nobody can track them.

*licenced taxis comply with the standards required for disabled (wheelchair), medically impaired or elderly customers who require a driver to go into a facility, collect them and safely assist them into the vehicle. Licenced taxis drivers have consistently provided an

outstanding service to these members of our community 24 hours a day, 365 days a year without discrimination.

Rideshare vehicles discriminate against this sector of the public.

*licenced taxis have extra safety devices in place such as a security camera and a GPS tracking device which protects the passenger and the driver.

Rideshare vehicles are private vehicles and both parties are vulnerable and at risk of possible assault.

*licenced taxis are completely covered via insurance and CTP (\$11,200 per annum).

Insurance of rideshare vehicles is questionable.

B) If ridesharing apps are to continue it will be difficult to maintain the best possible public passenger transport to the community because:

*licenced taxis provide a service for all the public and allow them to pay for the service through various monetary methods without discrimination.

Rideshare only caters for those members of the public with a credit card who own a smart phone.

*licenced taxis provide a guaranteed service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Rideshare drivers only drive when they want to and the availability of a service is not guaranteed.

*licenced taxis have fares set by the Government that cannot be changed.

Rideshare have cheaper fares which makes the service look more favourable to the public and licenced taxis unable to compete. Illegal taxi services distort the fare price and enable surge pricing.

C) If ridesharing apps continue the Government will stand to lose a considerable amount of revenue through the reduction or possible closure of the existing licenced taxi sector because:

*the Government makes money from taxis through fees, charges, stamp duty on sales of plates, fines issued and through tenders of new licences. The Government makes money from the tax the drivers and taxi owners pay annually.

Unregulated apps have drivers without an ABN which means no tax revenue for our Government. Uber takes all of their finances overseas so Australia is not profiting from the implementation of the unregulated app.

C) If illegal taxi services continue it will erode the integrity and viability of the taxi licencing scheme administered by the Queensland Government because:

*the loss of Government control will eventually have a detrimental effect on the transport industry as licenced taxis are unable to compete when they have to pay for continuous maintenance and required Government checks, higher registration fees plus higher insurance costs and tax to the Government.

Illegal taxi services do not have these expenses therefore can undercut regular licenced taxi fares.

*licenced taxi owners are regular Australians who may have had to borrow money to purchase a taxi licence for a large sum of money. The infrastructure within the licenced taxi industry with regards to the sum of money drivers receive in conjunction with the added expenses out laid to meet Government regulation are fine tuned and balanced in order to make the industry viable.

With the introduction of the rideshare app there has been a downturn in the services required for licenced taxi services. With this reduction in income there is the possibility that licenced owners will default on loans and less taxis will be available to provide a consistent service to the community as there will be no certainty that these licences will end up back on the road.

*licenced taxi owners are finding it difficult to engage drivers as they earn a lesser percentage of the revenue than with illegal taxi services and then have to declare their earnings and pay tax.

If the illegal taxi service continues there won't be any drivers to operate the licenced vehicles and the licenced taxi industry will crumble along with the predictable service it provides to the community, thus having catastrophic effects on the transport industry.

*licenced taxi services currently cater for all of the community. A portion of the community are now using the illegal rideshare app which is reducing the number of people the licenced services are now transporting. A licenced taxi service cannot remain viable servicing just a small portion of the population.

Illegal rideshare services are absorbing a large percentage of the general (easy) fares within the community that don't require extra assistance thus leaving licenced services to cater for the more specific fares without the income of the general fares to keep them viable.

A licenced taxi owner cannot remain viable when relying on only a small sector of the community who require transportation. The question will be who will then cater for the more specific members of the public who have additional needs, are medically ill or disabled and or require extra assistance such as the elderly. Who will transport the public who don't have a credit card or smart phone if the licenced taxi service is no longer a part of our community's transport system. With the introduction of this bill it is possible to stop illegal taxi drivers from being tempted to drive illegally and then the licenced taxi system will remain in operation.

I once again would like to add that I present this submission and support **the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015 providing 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.**

Yours faithfully

