

21<sup>st</sup> October, 2015

Research Director  
Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee  
Parliament House George Street  
Brisbane Qld 4000

Via email: IPNRC@parliament.qld.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.**

Myself and my wife presently operate an independent family small business on the Gold Coast and have the care and conduct of the following taxis in the GC Cabs service licence area.

I am the registered owner of the following taxis:-

1. Maxi Taxi 939, Taxi [REDACTED].
2. Maxi Taxi ST529, Taxi [REDACTED].

I am a company director of Coolangatta Cabs Pty Ltd, the owner of Maxi Taxi 959, Taxi [REDACTED].

My wife, Tracey Jane Holmes is the sole director of Border Cabs Pty Ltd, the owner of Maxi Taxi 969.

I am also the duly authorised operator of the following vehicles:-

1. Taxi Sedan 115, [REDACTED];
2. Maxi Taxi 963, [REDACTED]; and
3. Maxi Taxi 964, [REDACTED].

In my role I ensure that the above vehicles adhere to the operating requirements within the Transport Legislation as well as monitoring and educating the numerous Taxi Drivers on the importance of passenger and driver safety, customer service and the industry's regulations. In particular, I ensure each of the drivers fully comply and provide the essential service to disability customers as, with the exception of the taxi sedan, each of the vehicles I operate adhere strictly to PTDas requirements.

**Industry Experience:-**

I have 26 years experience within the Queensland Taxi Industry, and of that 20 years in the wheelchair disability industry including:-

1989 to date	Driver/Lessee/Owner/Operator
2003 to 2005	Regent Taxis/GC Cabs - Board Director
2003 to 2005	Regent Taxis/GC Cabs Chairman of By-Laws
2005 to 2006	Regent Taxis/GC Cabs Marketing Manager
2011 to Present	Regent Taxis/GC Cabs Vice Chairman - Operator's Committee

Noting my aforesaid experience within various areas of the taxi industry, including hands on driving and management, never have I ever seen any Operator within the Taxi Industry, given the likes of Uber, operate so blatantly outside the laws imposed not only by the Taxi Industry but also Federal Government taxation laws.

**Effect of Uber upon the Taxi Industry and my family business:-**

1. Financial hardship:-
  - a. Upon consideration of the financial records of each of the taxis I own or operate I have noted an estimated gross average of 12% financial decline per month since the introduction of Uber on the Gold Coast in April, 2014.
  - b. The effect of Uber has greatly reduced the value of the licence plates that have been purchased. The licences held by myself, my wife and in the corporate entities referred to above are highly leveraged against our personal home and are seen by our financial lender as being precarious.
  - c. Upon my enquiries with various lending institutions, I have been advised that they are loathed to finance the purchase of any additional licences due to the instability of the taxi industry. This therefore greatly reduces the saleability of these licences.
  - d. Many of my drivers have been with myself and family on a long term basis, several drivers for up to 20 years. The drivers rely solely upon their income derived as taxi drivers. They each have their own financial obligations, including families to support and financial borrowing commitments and many are feeling the financial strain and toll due to their reduced take each shift.



- e. The aforementioned issues have created severe financial and emotional strain upon myself, my family and the long terms drivers with whom I feel a personal responsibility for. Should Uber continue to operate, and my income continue to decline, I personally run the risk of bankruptcy should the bank choose to reassess the assets secured upon my home and chose to foreclose on same.
2. Failure by Uber and their “driver partners” to comply and adhere with Transport and Government , ATO regulations and requirements has created an unfair business playing field. To comply with existing regulations the following outgoings must be paid by operators in full compliance with said laws however these ***are not*** paid by Uber and its driver partners:-
- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| a. Driver training through an RTO facility for taxis 6 day course | \$425.00    |
| b. English assessment (even for born Australian citizens)         | \$ 90.00    |
| c. Taxi Driver Authority 12 monthly                               | \$ 75.00    |
| d. Yearly refresher course  | \$ 10.00    |
| e. CCTV cameras installed within vehicles (and maintenance)       | \$3,500.00  |
| f. CTP Insurance (sedan)  | \$6,500.00  |
| g. Fitout fees for wheel chair accessible vehicles (8 years)      | \$20,000.00 |
| h. Affiliation base fees (annual)                                 | \$10,380.00 |
| i. Commercial taxi insurance (up to \$500.00 per vehicle)         |             |

These expenses are put in place for the welfare and safety of the travelling public.

**Object of this Submission:-**

I respectfully request consideration be given to strictly enforcing upon Uber and it’s driver partners, all regulations that the current Taxi Industry and Government bodies presently impose including:-

1. As a Taxi Driver the Department of Main Roads and Transport holds the right to cancel A Driver Authorisation (DA, Taxi Driving Licence) for “Failure to meet requirements applicable to driver authorisation specified in the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994” (<http://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/Licensing/Passenger-transport-driver-authorisation/Information-bulletins/Drivers.aspx>).
2. The cancellation of a DA is then reported to the Booking Network’s which is legally obligated to remove them from the booking system. Not only is that Driver then removed from their current Booking Network but any other Booking Network within the state resulting in that Driver’s loss of livelihood within our industry, in spite of that as an “illegal” operator there are no licensing penalties for breaches of the Act which then would allow them to not only continue to drive but to continue to operate such services.

3. Such legal obligation listed above on Booking Networks and Owners/Operators/Drivers place enormous strain on our business but are administrated and adhered too with respect to the laws by which we are governed. Failing to adhere to the law we would leave ourselves and our drivers exposed as we are not a funded multinational company hidden behind multilayered spider web like companies.
  
4. Uber and it's driver partners show discrimination towards wheel chair bound customers as they do not have the lift services to facilitate wheel chair bound customers.

It is for the aforesaid reasons that I wholly support the amendment to the existing legislation.

Kind regards,

Mark Holmes

