

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

22 October 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

## **Re: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015**

### **Introduction**

Gold Coast Cabs (GCC) is the third largest taxi booking company in Queensland owned by over 130 individual shareholders. It has a fleet of over 380 vehicles managed by over 30 operators. Our driver pool exceeds 1,500 people who drive under our brand in either a full time, part time or casual capacity.

We respect and abide by the legislation and regulations relevant to the taxi industry. Often this happens at a great cost to our shareholders, operators and drivers however we acknowledge and appreciate the reasons for why much of this legislation exists. We pride ourselves on our record of delivering a reliable and safe 24/7 door to door service to the Gold Coast community including local residents and visitors, children, the elderly and those who have special needs and are wheelchair bound.

GCC supports the *Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015* (the Bill) and its intention to give a clear message to those who wish to operate outside of Queensland law that this will not be tolerated and there are serious consequences for those involved in such activity.

Further GCC believes that to ensure proper implementation of the penalties, the provision of sufficient enforcement resources is critical. In this regard, GCC suggests that police enforcement against illegal taxi services must also be considered.

### **Why GCC supports the Bill**

Illegal taxi services, predominantly under the brand of uberX, have been operating on the Gold Coast since August 2014.

UberX is one of a suite of products offered by uber, an overseas based company that takes money off-shore prior to paying its driver their percentage of fares completed. To the best of our knowledge, neither the company nor its drivers pay taxes in Australia. Unlike legal taxi services, uber does not report any travel data to the government. This data,

which is provided by legal taxi services, is critical to informing government when making decisions about economic development, industry development, road usage, road safety, tourism and a range of other issues.

Drivers working for illegal taxi services do not hold the appropriate authorisation required under Queensland law which means that they are not trained, regularly criminally checked and subject to the requirements of taxi drivers in relation to customer service, fatigue management, road safety and a range of other matters that ensure that taxi services work as an effective part of local community transport infrastructure.

The technology platform from which uber operates (its mobile app) provides a vehicle for circumventing the legislation and regulations relevant to the taxi industry, and other Federal and State Government obligations made of legal taxi services such as GCC and indeed all other businesses operating within Queensland.

To date the Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) has attempted to fine uber drivers. They have focused these activities predominantly in Brisbane and have had some early success. However since June 2015, there has been no compliance activity due to the technology capabilities of uber being able to thwart enforcement.

Additionally, driver fines have been paid by uber so individual drivers have not felt the consequences of participating in this illegal activity. In sharp contrast, taxi drivers who incur fines for speeding or any other traffic related matters must pay their own fines. They are not paid by GCC.

If the amendments proposed by the Bill are adopted people driving vehicles under the uberX platform will no longer be able to break the law without the fear of consequences. Importantly it will give a clear message that the Queensland Parliament will not tolerate individuals or businesses who believe they are above the law.

In order to enforce these penalties successfully, GCC believes that the Queensland Police must be directed to also undertake enforcement activity and not simply leave it to TMR officers.

On behalf of the hundreds of small business that make up and support the provision of legal taxi services within the Gold Coast Region, GCC calls on the Queensland Parliament to pass the Bill and extend enforcement responsibilities to Queensland Police.

Yours faithfully

Gordana Blazevic  
CEO | Gold Coast Cabs