

Submission to the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee

RE: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

We would like to take this opportunity to applaud the intention of this Amendment Bill, proposing to introduce a system of demerit points for drivers of illegal taxi services and commend it to the committee. Further, we would like to propose that this Amendment is introduced, and acted upon, with haste, for the sake of the Queensland Taxi Industry.

Background

We, John and Olga Economides, own five taxi licences, which we lease to Black and White, and Yellow Cabs in Brisbane. We purchased our first licence roughly 20 years ago, and then worked hard to pay back our loan on that licence to invest in another. This is how we have purchased all five licences; one at a time. One licence is held in our Self-Managed Superannuation Fund, designed to be a means to contribute to our self-support in our retirement.

We play by the rules. We have both worked hard all of our lives. We have never taken Government handouts — nor expected them. We pay taxes, and never ask for anything.

Taxi Licences

Taxi licences are very expensive to purchase, and they have always been tightly regulated by the government. It is the Government that determines how many licences are available, and that in turn determines their 'value'. Our decision to invest in multiple licences was mostly due to the Queensland taxi industry being known to be one of the best, possibly in the world - efficient, well organised and backed by the Government. We were sure we had the security of Government support and its' interests.

Therefore we saw it as a secure long term investment in our future. We have been proud to have invested in the taxi industry, and would happily have continued to do so.

Our income is based on the value of the licences - the lease amount paid to us is fixed to that value. Currently, the value of licences is 'uncertain', but there can be little doubt that they will drop considerably if some action is not taken quickly to protect these 'investments'.

We had considered that de-regulation may have been a possibility at some point. But if it did eventuate, we had (erroneously) assumed that that process would have been driven by the Government, and not as we have now, being dictated to the Government by a 'rank' outsider; led by a huge multinational organisation with no respect for the law and no loyalty

Theo and Olga Economides

to either our country, or worse, the thousands of people employed within, and dependent upon, the taxi industry.

That a foreign *company* can so bully a Government, and to see that Government not even attempt to respond is beyond belief. It defies explanation.

COS1S

The taxi industry is a high costs industry to all involved, including, but not limited to

- owners licence fees, insurances, levies, taxes, registration
- managers — infrastructure, wage/payroll, levies
- drivers — running costs (levies/insurance, fuel, uniforms), taxes

To be *forced* to 'compete' against drivers, and a company, who

- do not charge GST (which taxis *have* to charge on every dollar)
- pay no licence fee (until Uber, in Brisbane this figure was greater than \$500,000),
- pay no annual government registration, specialised third party insurance, and vehicle/safety inspection costs (total almost \$7,000)
- No not have to install GPS equipment or security cameras in cars, and
- do not have to comply with compulsory Government mandated training

is impossible. How can this be considered in any way equitable?

Other

There are other aspects of the operation of the illegal taxi drivers/companies that are very disconcerting, especially given the level of compliance requirement of legitimate taxis by the Government in these regards. Namely, drivers for proper cabs have to undertake the following to either meet required standards,

- English standards with an English Assessment (which incorporates customer training)
- Medical assessment
- First aid training
- A clear traffic history for the last three years

Without these, our drivers cannot drive. It appears that there is no necessity for illegal drivers to comply.

I thank you for your time and your consideration. I also take this opportunity to again strongly recommend this proposed Amendment for immediate action. In our view, it cannot come soon enough to mitigate the damage wrought by illegal taxi services. Hopefully however, it might help salvage what little there is left of the Queensland Taxi Industry.

21st October, 2015 2
Olga Economides

From:
To: [Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee](#)
Subject: re:- Private & confidential
Date: Wednesday, 21 October 2015 8:45:08 PM
Attachments: [Letter to Parliament.pdf](#)

To whom it may concern

I've attached my submission in regards to Taxi Licenses verses Uber I sincerely hopes this makes a difference.

Thank you for taking the time to read it.

Regards

Olga Economides