

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

I fully support the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015.

My parents and I bought a taxi license a few years ago opting for an alternative investment, however, we didn't know anything about Uber and the concerns/issues that were arising within the Taxi industry at the time. No one warned us about Uber, prior to our purchasing our taxi license. We had to lay out over half a million dollars for a taxi license alone, as well as hefty stamp duties on top of our initially expensive outlay. My question to the government is this - how can you even compare the cost of purchasing a standard taxi license, in Queensland to the cost of a standard vehicle if one were to then become a driver for Uber Xservice? Also the ongoing costs of owning a taxi (or a taxi license) versus the ongoing costs of a standard vehicle (as an Uber registered driver) does not even compare. Where is the justice in this?

It would be an absolute disgrace if my parents (and other taxi owners) were to lose their main source of income due to the government's ill decision in allowing Uber to continue to operate (illegally). My parents would potentially have to join the queue to receive a pension from the government if their hard-earned income were to disappear before their very eyes. Quite a shocking scenario in the extreme, wouldn't you concede?

A friend of mine, Amanda (surname withheld for privacy reasons) who is deaf and legally blind uses taxis to and from work daily, as well as for social outings and shopping trips. She uses 'the Taxi Subsidy Scheme' which is provided by the Brisbane City Council for those individuals who cannot drive and are strictly deemed immobile. She swears by this service and has the same allocated driver every day. Amanda has mentioned that her driver provides a friendly, safe and reliable service to her so much so that Amanda has recommended her sister, Tanya (again surname withheld), who is also deaf and blind, use the same driver as well. It goes to show that individuals with disabilities can gain some comfort in knowing that there is a safe and reliable service out there for them. Can the same be said of Uber? I think not! The fact that Amanda has a disability makes her eligible for a concession. Uber, on the other hand does not provide this service, nor the vehicles that have the required fixtures to transport the individuals with immobile disabilities around.

Taxis have the same app system as Uber, therefore, they operate in the same way. As a matter of fact, making a booking using the app can be quite a challenge for some people who do not use the internet nor mobile phones which lack the appropriate app. My parents would never book a cab via an app – firstly there is no internet installed at home, and secondly, they do not use mobile phones. Some people find it a real hindrance to adopt fast paced technology and operate in the old fashioned way of phoning for a taxi instead.

If anyone was to support Uber then they obviously don't understand how this will detrimentally impact the Australian economy. They are simply too blind to see the damage that an avaricious and unethical multi-million dollar company can do to Australian taxi industry. This has got to stop.

I strongly support the introduction of demerit points against Uber drivers and other ride-sharing businesses. This illegal business damages the industry and should not be continued to operate illegally.

I strongly urge that the competition policy be reviewed: that there is enforcement for Uber drivers to take out the required insurance (in line with Taxis), as well as other fees, and install state-of-the-art equipment in their vehicles to also accommodate individuals deemed immobile/disabled. Otherwise, Uber will continue to operate in an aggressive and exploitative manner, which should not be tolerated in any Australian State or Territory, and especially not in Queensland.

Uber has been known to barge in to a foreign country and deliver what it believes to be an ethical, lawful and cheaper alternative – however, the organization is not playing fair. Uber simply wants \$\$\$ in its own pockets.

The concerns raised thus far are simply not just about passengers' safety but also that of protecting the Queensland taxi industry and small businesses. I cannot stress sufficiently that there needs to be fair competition across the industry (that there needs to be a fair playing field!) and it is the government's responsibly to ensure that the Queensland taxi industry is protected 100%. Otherwise, the government will be accountable for many businesses potentially going bust if Uber continues to operate in an aggressive and exploitative manner which should not be tolerated. Some countries have banned Uber for their unlawful and hostile behavior in running their multi-million dollar company. I can only speak on my own behalf and that of my parents, in express concerns over potentially losing a business which one has worked so hard towards and having invested their hard earned money, and which is now providing my parents with their main source of income. It is no laughing matter. Uber does not care to play by the rules – Uber appears to be highly dishonest, destructive and unethical in applying their business model and we have a right to fight for what belongs to us. I'm surprised the government is still allowing Uber to operate, considering they are doing so illegally.

I cannot stress enough how this has affected the whole family financially, emotionally and physically. It's desperation in some cases for those who are barely making enough to get by. I can say on behalf of all the taxi owners that we are living in fear of uncertainty about our financial future. If the government is carelessly allowing this illegal service to continue to operate then we have the rights to demand a full compensation of any loss of income, and a full refund of the cost of our taxi license as well as the hefty stamp duties that was outlaid. Let's say the government will have to pay an enormous amount in compensation if this was demanded by the taxi industry. It would be irresponsible considering the government is actually making money from the taxi industry and nothing from Uber.

Hence, I implore the Committee to consider the concerns raised in my letter, when considering the wider changes being proposed under this Amendment Bill.

Thank you for your due consideration in this matter.

I look forward to receiving some further acknowledgment (of my submission) from your office shortly in return.

Yours Sincerely,

Elisa Fina

22 October 2015