

Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

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IPNRC

I have been driving taxis, full-time, for more than 20 years. On average I work an 11 hour shift, five days a week, Monday through Friday. The shifts start early in the morning.

I write to support the proposed amendment to the Taxi Services legislation, proposing to introduce demerit points to the drivers of illegal cabs, and strongly urge the Committee to recommend its introduction as quickly as possible.

It is a common thing now to have to wait up to three hours to get our first fare/s of a morning. Occasionally we can get lucky and get our first booking reasonably quickly, and that means we have a greater chance of having a reasonable day in terms of earnings. But a slow start usually means a non-profitable day; and by far the most of them now are slow starts. Previously, even in quiet times, it would be unusual to wait more than a couple of hours at the start of the day.

I have experienced a really noticeable (and crippling) drop on the number of fares I get every shift, and as a result income, in the last six to eight months. And as everyone (that is, drivers of legal taxis) is earning less, many are trying to drive longer. In some regards then there is even more competition now between our own drivers, even without including the illegal services, like Uber.

With Uber, there appears to be no limit on the number of people they can/will sign up to drive – it is truly a job for part-timers.

The situation, as it is, will totally ruin the taxi industry, for all time. That's the most worrying thing.

Until about three months ago, I was also working Saturdays, but that work has completely stopped. It is now not worth it for me to work week-ends.

My earnings have dropped between 30-40% just in the last six months. I cannot see that changing – perhaps only getting worse.

One of the most obvious changes, apart from the big drop in the quantity of work we are getting, is that it is a lot harder to get airport jobs, and for daytime drivers in Brisbane, that is our bread and butter.

Why is the taxi industry such a soft-touch? How can the Government accept a situation where they charge such high prices for licences and other high fees, where they have spent such a long time tightly regulating what can and cannot be done, and then just do *nothing* in the face of illegal taxi

services, but let them go. How can something illegal advertise on the radio for drivers? How is that even possible?

They (the illegals) have no fees, no levies or taxi-equivalent insurances, no safety measures – no regulations at all for anybody's protection. They do not even have a mechanism to deal with complaints. Why do we even need an inquiry? These are the facts.

It is very hard to see the possibility of the situation improving. At this stage, I am managing, but barely. I am just getting by – but if this continues, I am not sure what is going to happen. I do know though, that I'd never go and drive for them.