

Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015

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Position: Taxi Driver (Full-time)

I give my full support to this Amendment as proposed. I believe that to introduce the loss of demerit points to the drivers of illegal taxi services in addition to the fines they already receive (but not necessarily pay) is a good idea. Nothing really has been done to stop them stealing our work so far. The only way I can see is through a demerit point system.

I have been a taxi driver for 12 years, and currently work Monday through Friday, starting early in the morning – around 4.00am.

The effects of Uber/illegal taxi services that I see, and have felt, have been in the amount of work coming to us, as legal taxi drivers, and as a direct consequence of that, what I take home as earnings at the end of the day.

Overall, my current take-home income is down 40-50% from where it was about four years ago, and most of that drop has occurred over the last 12 months. An even sharper drop has occurred within the last six months. It is financially devastating.

Historically, if I started work between 3.00am or 4.00am (as do most full-time day-shift drivers), I would on average expect to get my first fare within about 30 minutes. Now it is not uncommon to sit in a rank for up to three hours before getting a fare. And airport fares are not common now.

Also previously, I would expect a couple of (often small) fares, or hails, every hour. I still get the odd hail, but nothing like it used to be, or what we need to survive.

The last school holidays (September 2015) were one of the worst holiday periods ever – if not the worst. I am dreading the coming January-February period, because they are always slow anyway. If it is really slow now, when it should be starting to get really busy before Christmas, after New Year's will be disastrous financially for taxi drivers. I do not know how we will cope financially.

I think the night drivers must be doing it worse, though. Night-time is when all the part-time Uber drivers jump into their cars and hit the streets. That's when the illegals really hurt legitimate taxis and drivers.

 21/10/15