

Research Director  
Transportation and Utilities Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street  
BRISBANE QLD 4000  
7 April 2017

Dear Sir/Madam

**RE: SUBMISSION TO THE TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION (PERSONALISED TRANSPORT REFORM) AMENDMENT BILL 2017**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this submission to the Parliamentary Committee investigating the *Transport and Other Legislation (Personalised Transport Reform) Amendment Bill 2017* and *Transport and Other Legislation (Personalised Transport Reform) Amendment Regulation 2017* tabled in Queensland Parliament on 21 March 2017. This submission examines and comments on elements of the Bill and Regulations that seek to amend the *Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) Act 1994* to implement reforms proposed in *Queensland Personalised Transport Horizon Stage 2*.

Taxi industry submission. 7.4.17

It appears frightening to reasonably informed people committed to the regulated Queensland taxi industry just how poorly informed and complacent a majority of people are toward the regulated taxi/ ride share debacle that has been enabled by the current Queensland government. The dominant feeling I encounter during conversation is that it is no big issue, inevitable, and beneficial. The overriding lack of concept appears to be a total mis- comprehension of the facts that-

1..3,600 Qld small businesses have been decimated, representing the number of government issued legal taxi licences, this represents financial ruin to between 15,000 to 50,000 people! When a few 100 people are flood affected there is a huge public sympathy and awareness.

2..the enormous shortage of taxi drivers since their average wage has been reduced to an average \$10/ hour.

3..the exceptional government leniency shown to ride share operators, who neither pay Australian tax nor collect GST.

4..the immense loss to public revenue from taxation and regulatory sources the enabled collapse of the regulated taxi industry has created. Queensland's GST share alone from the previous 1 billion \$ per annum taxi industry was \$100 million.

5..the enormous hardship currently experienced by taxi licence owners, most of whom are elderly, and most of whom lived from the proceeds of these licences which were purchased from saved funds from a lifetime of toil and saving. The government has actually acknowledged this firstly by their meagre 20k per 530k licence hardship package, then by their advice that this assistance will not affect peoples' ability to claim Centrelink benefits!

6..a part time, amateur, non dedicated, non- tracked, unregulated ride share service cannot realistically be compared to a full time, professional, dedicated, tracked, regulated taxi service providing 24/7 public transport and some wheel chair taxis. This is validated in the fact that decades ago our government insisted on regulating the taxi industry for overall the public good.

7..zero realization that unregulated private vehicle service such as ride share is a signature 3<sup>rd</sup> world operation that leaves the public enormous exposure to a myriad of highly undesirable potential outcomes. Few realize that many ride share drivers have previously been dismissed as professional taxi drivers.

In my personal case I have been financially crippled at 63 because of the government's recent enabling of ride share, with the consequent collapse of regulated licence prices from their high of \$530,000 a year ago to valueless today. The fact that government was quite prepared to collect stamp duty on each licence sale validates the price and the licence verity. Lease rates have consequently collapsed from \$2,850 monthly to \$800 monthly IF you can find a viable operator to lease your licence. Can you imagine the public outcry if government chose to evaporate land title?

In my case a long established operator of 21 taxis, who had a long term lease on my licences has suffered financial ruin, sold his 21 vehicles, laid off the 42 drivers, as well as office and maintenance staff it took to provide 2 shifts of 12 hours, with the inevitable handing back of my licence. Prior to our government's disastrous decision to enable and not regulate rideshare, businesses like this were buoyant and sustainable. **The government's rhetoric about job creation simply does not match the results of job losses bad policy has created.**

For elderly investors like myself this is financial ruin at the dead end of our working lives, this investment represents the savings from 40+ years in our workforce. Some have even lost their homes. In my case I have gone from self- funded retiree to financial desperation in 12 months following the collapse of a previously government guaranteed exclusive public transport industry that not so long ago was sustainable and buoyant. It is very important to comprehend this is not caused by bad management within the taxi industry but appalling government policy based on poor advice. Alan Fells, a prominent advisor to government on this is on the board of UBER, this would appear to be a huge conflict of interest.

Has anyone considered the effect of the disappearance of the capital represented by the 3,600 Queensland taxi licences going from \$530,000 to valueless? What this capital meant in the hands of astute investors was jobs, purchase of goods, like new taxis, and development of services in Queensland, like control and maintenance to taxis, to name just a few. This capital has been evaporated by dreadful government policy that has ensured a race to the bottom with only losers. Queensland voters are not likely to forget this. These are real people who need to eat, sleep, go to the dentist, pay health insurance, drive cars, buy clothes, send their children to school, and generally live.

**Please allow me to stress, this industry was not broken, it was buoyant, sustainable, professional, and safe, up until the point last September when appalling government policy enable ride share.**  
The same government that incidentally make hitch hiking illegal!

Most often these are older people who have already made significant contributions to Queensland, and have now been dealt an unnecessary cruel blow.

**Our representative, the Taxi Council of Queensland, TCQ, has prepared and submitted a summary outlining the course of governing action we consider responsible duty of care for win/ win outcomes for all Queenslanders.**

**I strongly urge you to adopt this summary.**

Thank you,

Robert Staszewski. 