

Carmel Sandona


10TH April 2017

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

Dear Sir/Madam

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

I have been in the Taxi industry since 2007. Started up as an owner/operator in partnership with my sister. Being exposed to the property market I felt it was a good idea to diversify into other interests and the Taxi Industry showed growth and stability and I saw an opportunity to treat this investment as an aid to increase my superannuation for my retiring years. After a lot of research our mum agreed and offered us her home as collateral to finance the purchase of our first taxi licence. The business model as an owner/operator was self-supporting and between the years of 2007 and 2013 my sister and I, we're able to collectively purchase four taxi licences with loans being supported by the appreciation of the taxi licences value themselves. With the income the taxis were generating, we could meet all our expenses including paying the principal and interest to the bank.

To achieve this, we were backed with a solid regulated Taxi Industry controlled by our Queensland government. Rules and regulations were put in place by the government to provide a good and reliable Queensland Personalised Transport system. As of August 2016, this was all thrown out the window when our government decided to allow, an overseas company such as UBER into our state, and legalise ride-share in Queensland. You can literally say that the Taxi industry or more broadly stated, Personalised Transport System in Queensland, was destroyed overnight. All the hard work and livelihood put in to operating a profitable and honest small businesses run by local hard working families also destroyed overnight.

Due to all this we are struggling financially and our family has been torn apart. Since ride-share came into Queensland we have seen Taxi Licences drop in value to the point that they are only worth a fifth of the value we have purchased them. Unfortunately, this has left us with a huge debt to the bank and our assets of four Taxi Licences worth at nearly \$2,000,000 before ride-share was legalised are only now worth \$400,000 or less in today's market. To try and reduce our loan commitments my husband had to step in to buy back my mother's house as it was supporting our bank loan, to keep this asset safe and a roof over my mother's head. We just couldn't have the bank sell the house from under our feet. This has placed us in a very difficult situation creating our own personal financial problems. I just don't know how long we can keep the bank on our backs as the loan needs to be

paid back and there is no opportunity for us to even sell our Taxi Licences because of their reduced value since ride-share was allowed in Queensland. There are many families out there in the same position as us who feel distraught and I have also heard many are on the road to desperation because they just don't know who else to turn to for help.

I finally would like to say that we are all wanting of having a level playing field across the board for the Taxi Industry and Ride-share to be on the same platform in our Queensland Personalised Transport system. But it is equally important to also look closely at the number of small businesses which have supported and worked hard to make a living in the Taxi Industry and now are faced with their livelihood and future stripped away from them. I strongly believe it is almost impossible for the many of us who have bought a Taxi Licence and have borrowed to do so, to be able to survive and avoid Bankruptcy. This side of the industry needs to be looked at very carefully alongside setting equal playing field (see below) for the two industries to work together.

Sincerely yours,

Carmel Sandona

List of Requirements

1. Establish an independent Personalised Transport Commission with legislative amendment, policing/enforcement, regulatory and policy development capacity.
2. Bailment Agreements must be retained, with the minimum work conditions and standards for all personalised transport drivers enshrined in legislation.
3. Security Camera requirements must establish a minimum standard, be consistent and uniform across all personalised transport providers to ensure the safety of all drivers and passengers (regardless of the service chosen) and to meet Queensland Police requirements.
4. Commercial-grade, anti-tamper GPS units must be fixed to all personalised transport vehicles and be remotely accessible to authorised parties.
5. All personalised transport vehicles to have emergency systems in place to support driver safety.
6. The Bill and Regulation must be fully consistent with all other relevant legislation including, but not limited to, disability discrimination and work, health and safety.
7. All personalised transport vehicles be required to have dedicated number plates (akin to "T" plates), rather than easily removable stickers. Plates to be provided only when evidence of appropriate CTP, public liability and certificate of inspection are provided.

8. Immediately define, and establish appropriate and equitable premiums for, the class/classes of Compulsory Third Party insurance for all personalised transport providers to address continued uncertainty.
9. All personalised transport providers must hold public liability insurance to prevent the State Government becoming the default insurer and to minimise potential risks to the community.
10. In the absence of vehicle age restrictions, establish clear vehicle quality and usage rate standards and hold operators accountable.
11. Increase licence fees for Booked Hire Service Drivers and Authorised Entities to help fund expected increases in regulatory and enforcement costs for Government and to better reflect the level of “trust” being placed on licence holders.
12. All drivers must have an ABN and be registered for GST before receiving a Drivers Authorisation.
13. The Government must establish a process for managing the risks of multiple affiliations by drivers in terms of both “chain of responsibility” and fatigue management. This includes drivers operating across both personalised transport and other transport (i.e. truck, bus) sectors.
14. Fully integrate taxis into the GoCard public transport network in the short-term.
15. Clearly define what constitutes a “hail” and “touting”.
16. Expressly prohibit the establishment and operation of Booked Hire Service pick up/and drop off zones, on public and private land, which represent pseudo taxi ranks.
17. Establish and maintain a register of drivers that have been disaffiliated or removed from platforms to prevent drivers from simply shifting to a new platform.
18. Establish clear and enforceable requirements for Government access to all data related to the delivery of personalised transport services in Queensland.
19. Expressly identify Police Check requirements in the Bill for all personalised transport drivers as part of Driver Authorization approval.
20. Maintain the capacity of the Minister to enter into Service Contracts at their discretion to ensure the Government has the capacity to respond quickly, and at the lowest cost, to changing or unique circumstances without the need for regulatory or legislative changes.