

*Committee Secretary
Public Works and Utilities Committee
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000*

Dear Committee Secretary,

We are both the public and owner operators of three Brisbane based Taxis Licenses. Since 2014 when ridesharing companies such as Uber, started their operations in QLD we have had significant impact to our business. Our Loans for taxi licenses and vehicles are in excess of \$700 000. The inadequate introduction and regulation of ride sharing by the government has caused us great stress and subsequently is causing hardship on our family.

Since stage 1 reforms have been introduced, this has made things worse for the existing taxi industry and stakeholders. With an unfair advantage, ride sharing operators have been favoured by the government and existing regulations have been disregarded.

For the past 100 years, all taxi services have had a government issued taxi licence which has always been a requirement. Now, ride share operators are sharing the same customer base and disguising themselves as a different entity and operating without a government taxi service licence. The Stage 2 reforms that have been put forward are not in the best interests of the greater community and is not creating an even "playing field." It also doesn't address this problem of licensing structure.

In the Stage 2 proposal, the government has not mentioned as to why they are not imposing any service licence fees while taxi service licence owners have paid up to the sums of \$550,000.00 AUD to operate. Also the introduction of booked licence service licences that are at a mere sum of \$237.26 AUD is not appropriate and does not demonstrate a level playing field which was the government's commitment from the OPT Review which had taken a significant amount of time.

Recently, as of April 2017, a court in Italy has ruled Uber in contributing to unfair competition towards the existing taxi industry. Further can be read all over the internet, Italy is not the only nation to also ban this type of service, Canada, Denmark, France, China, even some states still in USA have ceased operation.

We as operators, have followed all regulations put forth by QLD transport over the past 20 years. Removing current regulations will have a detrimental impact to passenger safety and quality of service. Existing regulations should be exercised by the government and to all personalised transport services.

There are no safety concerns with taxis, with vehicles having to be fitted with cameras, services being up-to-date, 6 months' machinery inspections, GPS tracking etc and having drivers undergo proper training courses etc.

Since the end of the 'mining boom' there has been a significant downturn in the economy. The number of taxis required has always been reviewed by QLD Transport every 2 to 3

years. If more are required then the tender process should be followed and new rideshare operators should also be buying an existing or new taxi service licences to operate within the areas. i.e. Brisbane Service Area. If you go to Brisbane City ranks on a Friday night (which should be the business night) you will find that there are an overabundance of taxi waiting over 1 hour to get a fare. Do we really need more taxis or Ride sharing operators? We don't need more vehicles on the road. Currently it is flooded with ride share cars, with both parties now unprofitable.

Uber is an online taxi service in disguise. They take a paying passenger from point A to B - how is this different to a taxi? The idea the driver of ride share only work a few jobs to earn some extra cash is a joke. A clear example of this can be Uber drivers having a dedicated rank at the Brisbane Airport and how's that different to a taxi? Many of the share drivers are working on a full-time basis. They are in fact taking the work off Taxi Drivers. There are now many cases on the Uber Drivers Brisbane Facebook online page where there is mention of ride share touting, mention of ride share drivers unloading and loading passengers on taxi ranks, also having personalised clientele without using the online booking application which is clearly in breach of many regulations. There is also lack of enforcement from the government which has resulted in this type of behaviour. There is dishonesty amongst the ride share operators and this must be documented.

Ride share operators are also making mention of their wages being below minimum wage. If this is the case, how does the government propose for the amount of services that will be operating. There is also points about registration fees comprehensive insurance fees which are not level with taxi services which are providing the same service. Please also appreciate the fact that Ride share operators are now contributing towards Brisbane's already congested roads, carbon emissions and liability to the public and their safety. Moreover, most ride share drivers are part – time drivers of which have another full-time job on the side which is affecting the wages of owners & drivers who rely on the taxi business as a source of income. The only thing ride share drivers and the government is creating is inequality, with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. Taxis which are already a dedicated personalised transport service, are seen now sitting idle on ranks waiting for work.

Myself, along with approx 2800 Queensland Taxi Service Licences owners are now in financial hardship. I have purchased my two existing licences in good faith from the government, with having set regulations in place to ensure that level playing field would always be upheld and that existing regulations are enforced.

I approximately have a total loan of \$900,000 AUD loan with the house being a security asset for this loan. In the coming years, other owners such as myself may find ourselves in a situation of not having a roof under our heads. The income has dropped to a level that I am facing financial hardship and unable to service the loans which is the result of the government's decision to introduce ridesharing services. I am now unable to even sell my business which has had a very strong record for the past 20 years to be in demand due to the negligence of the Queensland Government. The taxi industry helps feeds families of thousands and for people like us who also support a child with down syndrome.

I would appreciate if Queensland Government buys back our licence which is the most fair and desirable outcome. The assistance package that was provided by the government in March 2017 is inadequate and falls very short of being fair. There has been loss of income,

there's been detrimental impact to the taxi industry by the government with the improper introduction and regulation of ride share operators. Taxi vehicles are now faced with loss of job numbers due to approx. 4 to 5 times more of services on the road and also with the economy slowing down. The lack of care and negligence by the government towards the current taxi owner operators has devastated the industry.

The market is now technically deregulated, and it has not been done in a fair & equitable manner. **The state government has a duty of care to offer fair compensation to the owners for an act which has caused the damage to the value of the taxi licence.**

\$20,000 to every owner for loss of income for the next five years and \$9000 hardship payments shared amongst the owner and operator is again, a laughable joke for a business worth over \$500,000.

The State Government had issued all taxi licences and collected large sums of money for some licences. It is only fair if a buyback program for all existing licences and then a start a new platform which results in a level playing field. It is not fair on taxi owners or drivers who have followed the rules and have done nothing wrong. Please don't punish the innocent 2800 Qld Taxi Licence owners and operators.

I make a humble request to you, to put yourselves in our shoes with a profitable and viable business such as a taxi has been ruined overnight by the government's decision. Please make this decision with empathy, respect and sense.

Regards

Kuljit & Lakhvinder Dhillon

