

Submission to Public Works and Utilities Committee of the Qld Parliament 2017



Dear Premier and Transport Minister {QLD}, and members of the Public Works and Utilities Committee,

I have been in the taxi industry for the last fourteen years, both as the wife of a taxi driver, and then as a joint owner of a Brisbane taxi open licence with my husband since 2007. We have been owner/operators of this licence, employing both my husband and two other drivers, to keep the taxi on the road for approximately thirteen out of fourteen 12 hour shifts per week.

We took out a loan to buy this licence at \$405,000 plus vehicle and set-up costs, thinking that we could earn a reasonable living after the loan costs. This income would provide for our family which included four children.

Well everything worked out because we both worked really hard. Husband driving, and myself doing the pays and paperwork for 3 drivers, including compliance required by Qld Transport, vehicle repairs, and safety checks, paying ASIC, GST and income tax. We also paid for operator accreditation, taxi service licence fee, driver authority, registration of \$6500 and insurance of \$6000, compulsory radio fees to yellow cabs of \$10,800, per annum. Also don't forget the security levy of \$370 per annum, to keep patrons safe after a night out drinking. Rideshare companies are paying none of this.

So we paid for everything required by Qld Transport. You could say that we were milked by the State Government, on and on, always with a threat that our licence could be taken away from us if we did not comply. This threat can be found on the bottom of each demand for payment.

I write this letter because the State government has allowed uber to walk into the state. To this day Uber and their drivers pay no GST, income tax, or compliance costs. This is partly because Qld Transport and the police cannot distinguish them from ordinary private vehicles, and partly because there is no will to force compliance. It is an unfair playing field. Please refer to the attached summary from Taxi Council Qld for their recommendations, point 7, 8, 9, & 10

Income from our licence and for drivers generally have dropped so much that we in the industry cannot make a living. Every taxi owner and driver in this industry has been shafted. Some drivers drive a taxi, then use it for uber ride-sharing, to try to boost their income. Refer to TQC recommendations 12 & 13, 17 & 19. There are simply too many unregulated vehicles in Brisbane for any established taxi owners and drivers to make an income. The end result being financial hardship, bankruptcy, loss of homes, and suicide.

In my family, my husband, at a relatively young age, can no longer drive due to a progressive disease. We have had to lease our licence to a good operator. Due to unfair competition in this

industry, and reduced takings per taxi, our lease payments have dropped from \$2800 per month to \$800 per month. In April I have been told that it will go down to \$500 per month. Don't forget that as owners who lease out to the operator, we do not earn a percentage of takings, only an agreed amount. This \$500 per month is not enough to live on or pay off our loan. No-one will buy a licence now, and we cannot accept an offer that would leave us in debt to the bank.

All this means that we can't be business owners any more, because most of the income has been taken away from us. We are now collateral damage in the application of national competition policy. We are being helped out financially by family members. Our whole family including parents, siblings and offspring are now reassessing who we vote for.

I am but one of many people in this state who hoped to make a living and be self-funded in retirement, when reaching age pension age. Unless there are changes to this Qld transport industry, {please refer to Taxi Council Submission, and look at lack of enforcement of current laws}, I and many others in this industry would be better off selling up, spending it all, then applying for welfare.

Please consider and recommend a process that allows owners to exit the industry with dignity and without financial loss. This should include owners who are not allowed to drive their taxi due to health problems and/or are elderly.

Please recommend that full compensation be paid to all affected taxi licence owners who have been adversely affected by Qld Government actions.

The precedent has been set by a Taxi Licence buyback in the Northern Territory, and a buyback of fishing licences when mandated government law changes were brought in.

Sincerely,

Wendy Jackman

Director/Owner

Drive For You Pty Ltd

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.