




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

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HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (8.23 pm): I rise to speak in the debate on the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2016. Before I start on the taxi issue, I will make a few comments about the national scheme for heavy vehicles. A comment was made earlier about volumetric loading. That is absolutely critical to the trucking industry. Any compromising of that would be disastrous, particularly for owner operators who are finding it harder to operate. It is absolutely critical that the driver fatigue laws, the regulations and volumetric loading stay in the industry.

I turn to the taxi issue. Sadly, the most legitimate point made in the debate on the original bill before the House was made by Uber, the well-known ridesharing app. The primary point Uber made in favour of their position was, 'Whether as a government you like it or not, you had better just get on board because this is the technology and it is coming.' It is a pretty scary proposition that a \$80 billion multinational company has that attitude towards government. We had better cash in our pay cheques and leave it up to the multinational corporations if that is how this economy is going to run.

There has to be some regulation. At some point the government has to stand up and be mature and say, 'Look, we realise Uber is popular with a lot of young kids, but there is an economic imperative here.' We do not want to have people selling booze under their house or in warehouses. We do not want pharmaceuticals sold out of convenience stores. We have these regulations for a reason.

The member for Dalrymple is quite right in saying that we do not want to be at this point. We do not want to be talking about compensation because there should not be compensation. It goes without saying that it is grossly inadequate. Some \$400,000 was the average price for a taxi licence before all this happened. It certainly is not that now. With 3,200 taxis in Queensland that is about \$1.2 billion of capital value.

This is a really important point. We would have to think that most of that \$1.2 billion of capital value is going to cease to exist. That is going to be displaced out of the hands of Queensland mum and dad business owners to a multinational business overseas that avoids paying tax here. They are going to take that \$1.2 billion of capital value from Queensland business owners and take it overseas and we are going to take \$100 million off Queensland taxpayers for them to be able to do that.

If they are going to come in here and do that they can pay for entry themselves. I do not care how difficult it is. They should pay for it. There should be no questions asked. I think that that is a proposition that most Queenslanders, whether they use Uber or not, would agree with. I think that is only fair. If Uber is an \$80 billion multinational company they can pay to come in here, especially if they are ripping business value off others.

I have heard the argument that it is just the same as DVD shops closing down. People say it is technology so get with it. No, it is not. The government stepped in years ago and said, 'You must have these standards if you are going to drive a taxi. We demand community standards and we demand

safety standards.' We cannot do that to the industry and then pull the rug from under them and allow any sort of standards, but throw \$20,000 in compensation at them. That is not fair. It cannot be done. It does not pass the fairness test. That is why we can never support that aspect of this bill.

Be that as it may, these people are desperate. A heads of agreement is needed. Even though we are serving them tripe some people are on their knees. They are desperately in need of some help and in a hurry. That is why the bill had to be debated this week.

This is not industry adjustment. This is a multinational corporation doing away with community safety and industry standards that we have been accustomed to. It will take some time for things to adjust. Already we are seeing flaws in this free market approach—let us let the market solve itself.

We have Uber drivers out there now forming a union and saying, 'We need regulation around our wages.' We are seeing the birth of a new taxi industry. Everybody says that we have to do away with pesky regulations. We are seeing that people are calling for those in the same industry. We are seeing the birth of a new taxi industry, except the capital value has been displaced to a multinational company.

The largest share of wheelchair accessible taxis is in Queensland, at over 20 per cent across the state. It has provided a very valuable service. That will be compromised by this move. It has been said quite rightly many times tonight that the government's action will remove superannuation investment on taxis and limousines and reduce them to non-saleable assets. Unfortunately, limousines are a group that have been left out in most of this process. It is a relatively small industry, we would have to acknowledge, but still important. That means everything to those people who paid \$80,000 or \$130,000 for their licence and have taken loans out to pay for that.

We note that the Limousine Action Group, which took part in a protest out the front of Parliament House earlier this week, has been excluded from the industry reference group. There is only one representative from the limousine industry but multiple groups are representing the taxi industry which is simply unfair. The minister must consider this industry also to be part of the reference group in this process to make sure that the reforms are equitable for all.

We welcome compulsory third party as part of the discussion. That has to be in there. Other standards that apply to taxis should be welcomed as they are applied to any new ridesharing app coming into the market. Queenslanders have been accustomed for many years to a service standard and security standards, many of which are not transparent. They are difficult to see but we do experience them. We bask in the safety of many of those security measures that have protected us for years. A lot of those measures will go with this change in the industry.

We need to be grown up in this parliament. I just say beware the shiny new car that is the rideshare app. It has not been well tested in the market. Once the paint starts coming off and there is wear and tear, we are going to see some big problems and we will be recreating the taxi industry.