




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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**TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION (HIRE SERVICES) AMENDMENT
REGULATION: DISALLOWANCE OF STATUTORY INSTRUMENT**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (7.53 pm): In speaking to the disallowance motion, I want to say that it is very disappointing to see the deregulation of the taxi industry. It is bad for Queensland. It is disappointing to see a multinational company come into this state uninvited and take control. It is very disappointing that the government has played a part in supporting this. We need to look after Australian owned small business. Over the years these taxi owners have played their part in providing a reliable taxi service.

With the deregulation of the taxi industry there is an expectation that it will provide a better, safer and more reliable service, but as time goes by we will be in a situation where we need regulation. Regulation protects the security of passengers. It has been proven in other places that deregulation does not work. I truly believe that this is a matter of too little too late. Both major parties have failed to come up with a solid solution to this issue. This disallowance motion tonight is a small change, but it will not right matters for law-abiding taxi owners who are losing thousands of dollars. These steps, however, will assist in protecting the rights of the consumer to some extent.

I would like to speak to some of the correspondence that we have received since the deregulation changes. I do not want to mention their names but they are taxi operators. One letter writer states—

After a period of Ten months of angst and uncertainty awaiting the outcome of the independent Varghese review, it is with extreme dismay we learn a meagre 20k is meant to cover us for a loss in value of 400k inflicted by ill advice.

Another taxi owner said—

We are struggling to come to terms with how we are going to be able to continue operating and still offer a 24/7 service as stipulated by regulation. It's good to see some of the costs lifted (unfortunately at the expense of safety in most cases) with more to come, but the 'level playing field' will never be achieved.

To quote from another letter—

Queensland Mum and Dads have invested their life's work in State Government Infrastructure in good faith. Many, including ourselves have considerable debt to service. Many will be at risk of losing the family home. We were planning to be self-funded retirees; now our Superannuation nest egg has all but vanished.

Another one said—

As taxpayers it's extremely disappointing we should be burdened with the huge cost of funding Millions of Dollars (the State does not have) to compensate the cost of paving the way for Uber, a greedy Multinational with a Worldwide reputation for ignoring laws.

Another letter writer states—

You CANNOT JUSTIFY the train wreck the Queensland Government is inflicting on:

1. The largely unsuspecting public of Queensland (no CTP or any other insurances in place for Rideshare).

To give members an example of why we have grave concerns, in Charters Towers we have a taxi service that does not make any money when picking up disabled people to go from A to B—none whatsoever. However, where they do make their money to cover their costs is in the peak hours. With this deregulation it will be impossible for that maxi taxi to provide that service to disabled passengers at an affordable rate and we will not have a taxi service in those rural and regional towns. This is one of the reasons we fear deregulation.

I give credit to the opposition for putting forward this disallowance motion in relation to some of the regulations. Obviously to wipe out deregulation is more complex and would require new legislation. The KAP is determined to introduce legislation to bring back regulation. As time goes by it will probably happen anyway.

We feel that small-scale taxi owners have been completely done over. This is a really bad move. I am so disappointed to see benefit going to multinationals, which are picking up people in an unsafe way without regulation. The whole idea of the regulations was to protect people, including children. In one of the public hearings, we heard that of the people picked up by taxi services 10 per cent are students. At least now there are protections, regulations and security checks, but those and all of the other factors that go with this will be undone.

I commend the opposition for this initiative, which seeks to give some sort of protection to taxi owners. We need to support Queensland and Australian owned small businesses. This is a good initiative, but it does not go far enough. We will be introducing a private member's bill and seeking advice on how we can overturn the deregulation of the taxi industry.