

MEDIA



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No strike by SA taxis but \$50 billion Goliath ‘makes a mockery of the law’

Taxi Council SA has labelled \$50 billion US giant Uber’s latest attempt to lure South Australian passengers into using its UberX-style service as making a mockery of the law.

Taxi Council SA (TCSA) President Jim Triantafyllou was responding to this week’s announcement that Uber will be offering rides to consumers at \$4.99, just below the \$5 threshold in SA’s passenger transport regulations.

“In my opinion, the \$4.99 so-called ‘fun rides’ breach the *Passenger Transport Act* and create artificially low prices that cause suffering to hard-working Australian small business owners who have spent a lifetime building a business driving taxis,” Mr Triantafyllou said.

“It’s just another indication of the contempt with which this multi-billion dollar giant treats the regulatory framework which exists ultimately to protect passengers.”

Nevertheless, Mr Triantafyllou said that TCSA is not calling for a strike in SA because the taxi industry prefers to work cooperatively with the independent review panel set up by the Government to make further improvements in the SA taxi and chauffeured vehicle industries. “The Government has chosen eminent, experienced and knowledgeable members of the review panel,” he said.

UberX has been operating illegally interstate for some months and this week one of its Queensland drivers was the subject of a serious incident involving a young female passenger.

“The continued push by UberX to enter the South Australian market raises very serious safety concerns in relation to regulation and the absence of other measures designed to protect passengers, such as cameras and GPS tracking which are all provided in taxis,” Mr Triantafyllou said.

“As a parent, I would ask all other parents how you would feel about your son or daughter getting into a car with a driver who has not been subject to Government-managed health, police and child protection checks?” he said. “What’s more, if something goes wrong, there are no cameras in UberX vehicles.”

Mr Triantafyllou says the penalties for the illegal provision of a transport service must be looked at Australia-wide.

“There should be not just fines, but demerit points for the drivers and the impounding and selling of vehicles for subsequent offences – there must be accountability.”

“After all, these drivers are flouting a passenger transport system that exists to protect the travelling public,” Mr Triantafyllou said. “All we have ever asked for is a level playing field and for passenger safety to be put first.”

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