Extract from Hansard

Tuesday, 18th February 2025

PASSENGER TRANSPORT (POINT TO POINT TRANSPORT SERVICES) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. A. PICCOLO (Light) (17:26): I rise to speak in support of the bill. I note that the Passenger Transport (Point to Point Transport Services) Amendment Bill amends the Passenger Transport Act 1994 to implement recommendations arising out of the government's commitments to review the act and reform the point-to-point passenger transport industry, which includes taxi, chauffeur and rideshare. The bill also seeks to implement elements of the taxi industry support package, approved as part of the state budget during the 2024-25 financial year.

On 30 August 2024, the government released the review, which made 29 recommendations informed by feedback from industry, customers and other key stakeholders. The review has provided a framework for broad and enduring change designed to make services safer and more reliable while supporting a more sustainable industry. It is certainly a truism that change in this industry is required. There is no doubt this sector has experienced significant challenges, and those challenges are from the various disrupter-type industries and services provided. From safety concerns, fraudulent behaviour and industry participants subject to different requirements, this review and the bill before us aim to build a framework to overcome some of these concerns.

As I said, I do support the bill. While I believe the bill is well intentioned and has some sound objectives, I am not yet 100 per cent convinced that this bill will address some of the issues raised in my electorate. I think it is important to raise those concerns. Having said that, I am not sure what can be done, but this bill will certainly provide a foundation for those concerns to be looked at in the future. The greatest concern I have is that the Gawler area was, for better or worse, put into the metropolitan point-to-point area

some time ago by the previous government. The previous government also allowed one operator a licence for that area.

That certainly theoretically increased the number of taxis available to the town of Gawler. The problem was that because Gawler was previously under a country model and had local services, they now have to compete with the Adelaide-based taxi services. That competition in itself is not a bad thing. However, what has resulted is that all the profitable part of the business was taken up by the Adelaide-based company and, if you like, the less profitable trips were left to local services, which in the end meant they could not make enough money to keep it sustainable.

One of my concerns is that while we can open all this up to rideshare and other things, they are the ones who actually like to pick and choose the trips they take. In the end, you will have a certain number of trips in a place like Gawler and other nearby towns where people actually want to take a short trip. It might be from their home to the main street, which may only be a kilometre or two, which is not a big trip for any taxidriver. However, for that person it means whether they can actually leave their home and do what they need to do—go to the doctor, go shopping or whatever the case may be.

The Adelaide-based services will not come out there to pick people up. They will be there, though, on Friday and Saturday nights, all over the place, when the demand is high. Unless in this industry you allow some people to have a bit of both, some of those players will just fall out of the market and some people will be worse off. That is one of the concerns.

The other concern is a very vexed question, because on the one hand I hear numerous complaints from my electorate regarding access to access cabs, and on the other hand I understand the government hears from the providers that they do not have enough business, etc. Certainly in my area there is a huge demand for access cabs, and I have heard a number of people complain about the access cabs being either late, by hours and hours, or not turning up. Again, that sort of fits into the model where we can open this industry up but it does not mean, in some markets, that they will turn up. There is a real risk of market failure, and there will be pockets of people who actually might be worse off under this new model than they are at the moment.

I hope I am wrong. I hope that by introducing this latest proposal it will actually provide for greater opportunities for people to be in the marketplace. I hope that some of the provisions in this bill will make entry into the marketplace equal for all players. I seek leave to continue my remarks.

TIME EXPIRED