

TAXIS — UBER TAX

**602. Mrs L.M. HARVEY to the Premier:**

In relation to the Premier's new \$120 million Uber tax—the highest in the country—can the Premier confirm —

**Dr A.D. Buti** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Armadale, this is not a chat fest. I call you to order for the first time. Member for Scarborough, start again.

**Mrs L.M. HARVEY:** In relation to the Premier's new \$120 million Uber tax—the highest in the country—can the Premier confirm that his 10 per cent tax grab will simply be passed on to Uber passengers, as the government is powerless to ensure that they do not pass it on?

**Mr M. McGOWAN replied:**

Obviously, the government is putting in place a scheme to deregulate the on-demand transport system in Western Australia, and as a consequence of that deregulation—as part of that deregulation—we want to see small businesses that have invested their money protected. That is the system we are putting in place. The government has indicated for some time—in fact, a lot of members of this house have indicated for some time—that action is needed to deal with what has occurred in the on-demand transport system for a long time. We have found over the past five years or so that people in the taxi industry who have invested large amounts of money purchasing plates in a highly regulated system, protected by law of this Parliament, have been victims of a service that has come in outside of that arrangement. We have decided not to outlaw Uber, unlike other jurisdictions around the world, but what we have decided to do is put in place a level playing field for taxis, Uber, Shofer and the like in Western Australia. That is the fairest way of dealing with a very difficult situation confronting thousands of small businesses and families in Western Australia.

**Mr Z.R.F. Kirkup** interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Dawesville, I call you to order for the first time.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** We think it is a fair way of dealing with a situation confronting thousands of Western Australian families across the state. I have some sympathy for those small business people, and I hope that the Parliament recognises that over the last five to seven years, this issue has not been properly dealt with. These people have not been fairly dealt with. The response that was provided before was haphazard and inadequate. That is the reality, and members opposite all know that. It is a difficult issue to grapple with; I acknowledge that. I acknowledge that it was difficult for the previous government, and it has been difficult for us, but we want to fix the situation once and for all with a fair approach to people in the taxi industry who invested their money and did not receive fair treatment when the laws under which they were operating were subverted. We want to make sure as well that we protect consumers with a competitive, deregulated system with one set of rules for all operators. That is what we are doing.

Several members interjected.

**The SPEAKER:** Member for Dawesville, I am on my feet. I could call you for the second and third times, but I will call you to order for the second time. I know you are excited about this issue, but you are no good if you are not in the chamber. I call you to order for the second time.

**Mr M. McGOWAN:** The arrangements the government is putting in place will provide for a more competitive market. It will mean a reduction in fees and charges on taxi operators. There will be a level playing field for both Uber and like services and for the taxi industry, removing a range of the regulations that are in place. We have every confidence that the more competitive marketplace in Western Australia will benefit consumers.