

I am a full time Queensland taxi driver. I have been driving Queensland taxis for over 5 years.

I am writing in support of the private member's Bill, the Transport Legislation (Taxi Services) Amendment Bill 2015, presented by the Member for Mount Isa, Mr Rob Katter MP, on 16 September 2015.

The Queensland regulated taxi industry represents my livelihood and a community that has helped me during my time becoming an Australian. Now as a citizen, this industry is helping me to support my growing family. My dream is the same as other Australians, to own my own home, in Queensland.

While I do not own a taxi, I am very grateful to the many owners who have allowed me to work on their vehicles to make a living. These vehicles have all been regulated, lawful Queensland licenced taxis.

Since the emergence of illegal taxis in Queensland, my ability to make a minimum wage has been destroyed. My taking has been reduced by 30% on average and increases to over 40% at peak hours. Queensland's population is not growing at such a rapid rate (in one year) to sustain the level of illegal taxis now working the streets. I find I am now working much longer hours more often to make less than I have ever made before.

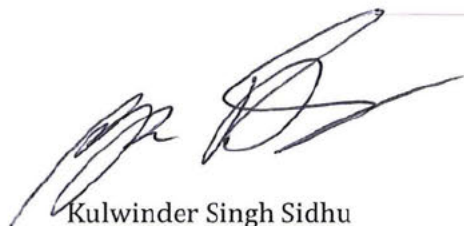
I am now facing the prospect of leaving the legal taxi industry to join the unemployment queue – as this can be more sustainable.

Illegal taxis cannot be sustained in a population of such a small size. They should not be allowed to operate in a state such as Queensland where there is a heavily regulated, highly policed taxi industry that is set by the Queensland Government.

I know, first hand, that the illegal taxi drivers share with me: "...we don't care as no one can catch us; even the fine does not have to be paid."

If this industry is to be spared then urgent action must be taken. The measures introduced by this Bill will help to halt the illegal taxi industry.

I call on the Queensland Government to apply their regulations and laws equitably: you set the rules, you are responsible for making sure there is no discrimination that hurts those who follow them.



Kulwinder Singh Sidhu