




Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

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## **HEAVY VEHICLE NATIONAL LAW AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (8.17 pm): I rise to speak to the Heavy Vehicle National Law and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. It is disappointing that this bill has come this far and is before the House tonight, because the taxidrivers are not looking for compensation; they are looking for a job and they are looking for an industry. From the beginning, all they have asked is for the government to ensure that we have a regulated process. This is what they call deregulation. I worked in the railways for 20 years. Redundancy packages were put in front of us. Our depots were closed down and the railway stations were closed down. They took the package. We talked about compensation and we talked about fighting for a better package, but do members know what they really wanted? They wanted a job!

We can come in here and talk and fight. We can point the finger at each other and say that we need more funding, which we do. However, in reality, we need to go back to the grassroots. We need to look after small business taxi operators who have paid their dues. They have paid the price. They have paid for their taxis and they have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars doing so. They have set up security cameras and so on. We did something. We put a bill before the House to introduce demerit points to combat the rise of illegal taxis. The sad thing is that we did not have the support for that bill. In this legislation we are looking at government compensation. We absolutely have to fight for compensation now because this has gone too far. We should be taxing this multinational company and paying compensation to the taxidrivers and limousine operators who are going to be impacted by this legislation.

Let us talk about compensation. It is a great thing, but we should be targeting Uber. We should be targeting illegal taxis. We should be looking after the small businesses of this state and not hurting them and destroying their businesses while giving them a pittance to make them feel good. We will all brag about it. Rather than sitting here and saying that we need to give these people more compensation, we should be fighting to stop this multinational company that puts nothing into this country and has done nothing for this country. We need to put a stop to them.

Mums and dads have invested their lives into the taxi industry and limousine industry. Some \$20,000 is a pittance particularly when we consider that a taxi licence is worth \$400,000 to \$500,000. A personal statement was passed on to me yesterday from a limousine licence owner whose entire business has been damaged by the mishandling of this issue. The statement reads—

After the early death of my father my mother immigrated from Italy to Australia with two young boys. My hard working mother ensured we were instilled with strong work ethics and a deep commitment to family.

In 1971 I worked hard towards an opportunity to enter the transport industry. My wife and I scrapped together everything we had, I worked three jobs and my wife worked two jobs. I was a full time hairdresser, came home and drove cabs until 2am and I waited tables in a restaurant. My wife worked full time and then washed dishes at the restaurant. We did without any luxuries or holidays. We invested all we earned into the transport industry. For our entire working lives we worked hard to provide a future for ourselves and our children. I believed all of our hard work would give us a stable future as these licences were a safe investment, after all they were issued by the government.

I have worked in this industry since 1971. Paid all of my fees, provided employment for others and operated under the strict government regulations. Since the illegal entry of Uber into the transport industry the lease from a limousine licence has gone from \$650 each per month to \$350 per month. I am one of the lucky ones who currently have my licences leased. This is going to change very soon.

Minister Hinchliffe plans to cancel my limousine licences and take my income to zero, and make them worthless and unsaleable. With no form of compensation, no consideration for my property rights and no consideration for the welfare of my family.

At 67 years of age, I believed that the work and financial investment my wife and I put in to the transport industry would support and protect us, our children and grandchildren. I used to feel proud that I had provided well for my family and provided opportunities for them that would enrich their lives. Now the financial future of my family is uncertain.

My brave, strong widowed mother left her homeland, with two young boys to bring us to this country so that her descendants would have opportunity. My wife and I continued this vision for our family, and now everything we have worked for is being stolen by this Government.

I wanted to bring that statement to the attention of the House because I am gutted too. The taxi owners I know are gutted. Limousine operators are gutted. It is a sad fact that the parliament is actually supporting a multinational corporation rather than the small businesses of this country. That is a disgrace.