

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to draw your attention to inherent concerns I have, and my strong opposition to the draft:

- *Currency (Restrictions on the Use of Cash) Bill 2019;*
- *Currency (Restrictions on the Use of Cash – Expected Transactions) Instrument 2019;* and
- *Currency (Restrictions on the Use of Cash) (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Bill 2019.*

As uploaded on the 26th of July 2019 on Australian Government Treasury Website accessible via the following address <https://www.treasury.gov.au/consultation/c2019-t395788>

The proposed changes to cash transactions within this Draft Legislation concerns me as a mechanism, just as much as the means by which the proposed changes have been communicated to the voting and taxpaying Australian public.

My concerns is in the wider implications that this type of Legislations will open the door to.

No doubt you can already appreciate that we are in a fragile global marketplace. As one dimension of this, seeing instances of people being denied financial services through the banks, based on political reasons, are on the rise.

Honestly, I'm fearful for our future, and what this may look like under the steering of people who issue these types of propositions in the way that this, and previous examples of legislative changes have been issued. Case in point I would like to cite with regard to this being the way in which the *Financial Sector Legislation Amendment (Crisis Resolution Powers And Other Measures) Bill 2017* was passed in to law.

But let's not talk about the past right now. Let's consider the future. I would like to take you on a journey to a place in Australia, not too far physically from where we are right now. But its a little ways down the track as far as time goes.

I would like you to meet Khaled. A 24 year-old, self employed Tradesperson. Khaled has faced a number of challenges as a member of the taxpaying Australian public. Khaled doesn't hold an Australian passport, and he struggles to open and hold a bank account.

Why?

Khaled was born in a country where international relationships and circumstances have changed in the last quarter century. For Khaled, 24 years ago was another life that he has little to no recollection of.

Khaled has never been back to the country where he was born, and considers himself to be an Australian. He left Iran with his parents and older sister when he was barely even two years old.

Coming to Australia was supposed to be the beginning of a better life. One where he could grow up to do something meaningful. One where his sister could have a future that was of her choosing. One where his parents could sleep at night without worrying about if they were safe or not, in their own home.

Yet today, Khaled struggles to function in a legal way in the Australian marketplace.

Why does he struggle?

It's now 2026, and the implementation of the 2020 Cash Ban Law, which is how it has become publically known, means that Khaled risks facing harsh penalties for getting paid to do the work he does. Who would have thought that building homes for people to live in could be so dangerous?

Khaled can't offer his clients a way to transact with him that includes using a bank account; he can't get one. But the work that Khaled does is much needed in a country where the cost of housing has rendered many homeless. And this is looking more and more like a future that Khaled may even face himself.

Fewer and fewer clients are prepared to run the risk of paying Khaled for his services in cash, because they fear prosecution themselves. In fact, simply dealing in cash for any transaction is becoming very risky in 2026.

'This law was supposed to be for business to business transactions only, wasn't it?' one of Khaled's clients asked him.

'Have you seen that there's a 10% cash tax at the shops now?' he remembers her saying. This didn't seem right to Khaled, but that's what he has seen himself too.

Who would have thought that things would have changed this much? And not in that way that it was originally communicated.

It's not Khaled's clients fault, nor Khaled's, that things are the way they are today. Back in August of 2019 they were happily enjoying their lives. Khaled was still in high school, and had dreams of taking vacant blocks of land and turning them into homes for families. Politics and lawmaking wasn't on his radar then.

Sure, there was concern about the trade war between the US and China, and what that might mean for jobs. But no one thought that the Australian Government would set in place something that would radically impact the lives of their families, and the generations to come.

Claire, one of Khaled's neighbours, recalls a few things on her Facebook feed and YouTube from back then. But at the time she had put it down to a few people being irrational and dismissed it.

With little more consideration given to the simple act of writing an email with her views, she went about her day. It was an uncharacteristically sunny day amidst a week of heavy rains and record cold weather for Melbourne. A good day to grab a coffee around the corner at the local café.

Claire's brother, David, owned a business back in 2019. He never saw anything about the proposed changes, or the muffled call for public consultation. David is now serving time in jail. David's crime was that in 2021 he used cash to pay for a couple of transactions within his business.

These were all above board and reported as a part of his activity for that tax year. And this is where David discovered that transacting in cash over \$10,000 was illegal, and had been for some time now. His Accountant had no choice but to report the matter to the ATO and other officials.

Today, David's wife, Alexandra, and their children are ultimately paying for his 'crime'. With no father figure, his daughter and son have become a handful for their mother.

Losing her husband, having to seek assistance from unreliable family members to help look after her kids, Alexandra is struggling to pay the bills on a single income. Alexandra is also struggling with the Black Dog that comes to visit from time to time, and very acutely feels that her life, and the future of her children's lives hangs in the balance.

Claire often talks with Khaled about the challenges he faces, and those she has seen with how Alexandra and David's lives have unfolded in these current times.

She feels for those around her who have been impacted by the introduction of the 2020 Cash Ban Law. But she knows in her heart of hearts that she dismissed the calls of the concerned voices she heard online and in the media. Isn't it funny how hindsight is 2020?

Feeling that the elected members of Parliament had her, and the wider public's best interests at heart, Claire thought that such atrocities could never happen. Certainly not in Australia. Not this beautiful place. Not our golden land of opportunity.

But the world today looks very different. And 2026 in Australia has become a place that many people are fearful of. Knowing that by simply being born in what is looked upon by the establishment as 'the wrong kind of country' at the time, entire families are precluded from participating in society at fundamental levels.

Khaled is looking at a future where he can't even pay his rent now that people are becoming more and more concerned about dealing in cash for any transactions. He's wondering how he'll manage to buy groceries. He can't get a job, because all employers have been forced into the eCash system, which he can't access because he can't get a bank account.

Khaled, a young man with skills that Australia needs to address key housing shortage issues, has been cut off at his knees because of the 2020 Cash Ban Law.

Is this what it meant in 2019 to be Australian? To sit by and watch the rights of other become so eroded that we would eventually find our own civil rights foundations have been compromised?

In closing, I would like to leave this as an open letter to Khaled.

Khaled, whoever you are, please know that this was not something that was supported by the people of Australia. Many of us were not given the fair and equitable opportunity to participate in the 'Democracy' we voted for.

This Draft Legislation was not advertised on the front page of the newspaper. It was not broadcast in forums that the average person participates in. There was no letterbox drop or email campaign to make us aware of something so important.

Isn't it funny how during election time there's an abundance of information in all streams of media? You can't drive down the street without seeing a poster for one of the many Parties that are running. You can't turn the television or radio on without a sponsored ad. And if you noticed in early 2019, you even got these on YouTube! Yet this, changing how we transact in the marketplace, got little to no air time at all.

It really makes me wonder whose best interests are being served here.

Many of us foolishly trusted that our Government would do right by us. No one ever thought that it would come to this. However, we did cast our votes, and chose to act, or not act, as individuals in this matter too.

As I write to you from August 2019, with a little over 24 hours left for public comment, I'm sorry. I wish that more people could have been made aware, and understood how big the impact would eventually be.

Kind Regards,

Matthew Carpenter