Cabbie says he was fired after corruption complaint

**KIERAN BANKS**

A TAXI driver has claimed his confidential complaint to the Public Accounts Committee was leaked to industry leaders and led to his sacking.

The driver made a submission for the upcoming parliamentary inquiry into taxi industry corruption, but claimed his employer of two years was pressured into sacking him by industry heavies.

He said he believed his submission and name were leaked to taxi licence holders and Transport Department officials.

He was fired last Tuesday.

“My former employer told me other operators and the transport department put pressure on him to sack me from the job,” the driver said in a letter to the NT News.

“My owner sent me a message that I have no taxi anymore because I gave information to the PAC about subleasing,” he said.

Independent MLA Robyn Lambley said she had concerns drivers would be victimised if they spoke out about subleasing.

However, she doubted the leak came from within the Public Accounts Committee.

“I’ve spoken to Kate Worboys about this issue about trying to protect the identity of people making submissions to the inquiry because of this very problem,” she said.

“These people, particularly the taxi drivers, are extremely vulnerable. They don’t have any security of employment and I have been told by many taxi drivers — that by talking to me or anyone else about allegations of corruption in the taxi industry they could be putting their own employment at risk.”

The first sitting of the public hearing is scheduled for July 20 in Alice Springs.

Ms Lambley called for the inquiry in February, after claiming the taxi industry was “rife” with corruption because it wasn’t properly regulated.

**Catholics’ tribute to pioneering NT priest**

DARWIN’S Catholic Diocese will tomorrow celebrate the life of the Top End’s first priest and his influence with the Aboriginal people of the Cobourg Peninsula during the 19th century.

The Father Angelo Conference Symposium will be hosted by the NT/QLD council of Italy, Ludovico Camussi, at the NT Public Library in Parliament House from 9am to 1.30pm.

Father Angelo, from Trento in Northern Italy, was the pioneering Catholic missionary to the Aboriginal people of the Port Essington area in the 19th century.

Darwin Bishop Eugene Hurley said presentations at the symposium would include a number of international guest speakers.

“The symposium will highlight Father Angelo’s significant contribution to the understanding and documentation of Aboriginal languages, culture and customs,” Bishop Hurley said.

His journey to the Territory in July 1846, Father Confolieri was just one of two people to survive his boat being shipwrecked near Cape York in Torres Strait,” Bishop Hurley said.

**Mixing it up, troppo style**

**MOLLY BAXTER**

MIXOLOGIST Pouya Khoshtarash thought he was destined for life on the tools but is now living the dream behind the bar, mixing drinks and creating fabulous cocktails.

The Iranian-born carpenter said when he came to Darwin he started a job as a normal bartender, where he found his love of mixing cocktails.

“I just got so excited about making cocktails and was trying to learn and do more and just watched the other bartenders,” he said.

Now, he’s one of the most experienced at SkyCity Darwin.

“I love tequila-based cocktails, like a margarita or a rum-based one, like a rum and sour,” he said.

Today, Mr Khoshtarash was one of many Darwin bartenders battling it out at the first ever Cocktail Oscars competition at SkyCity’s Sandbar.

Each bartender can enter their own cocktail but until then, Mr Khoshtarash is keeping his recipe a secret.

“It’s really exciting because there are a lot of good bartenders in Darwin so I don’t know what people will do.”

The Cocktail Oscars is on from 4pm today, and is open to anyone who wants to watch the action.