I enjoy playing poker because it is a game of skill and a way for me to interact with other people. I especially love being able to play online because I can play at any time of day and there is always other players to play with. I have a physical disability and I am limited as to what I can do with other people and online poker means I can still have interactions even when I am sick and I can play a game I enjoy. It also means if I have been in bed all day sick and then I am awake at 3am I can socialise and have fun from home in a safe and happy way. I don't like going to the pubs or nightclubs and drinking. I like my mind to be challenged and online poker does that for me. I can have fun and interact with people and it costs me no more than it would if I were to spend my money going to the movies or going out drinking like a lot of other Australians do every night for fun. It's not like the slot machines where your money just goes down the drain. Every day I learn something new and I feel challenged and I am playing against real people, not against a casino which would not be fun for me.

I would like to see the industry regulated so that I will be able to play on sites like PokerStars where I know my money is safe and that the game is monitored to make sure it is not rigged against players. They ensure that any money I deposit or win is safe for me to withdraw any time I choose and that it won't be stolen by shady companies that have no integrity. I am scared that the online market will be flooded with shady companies if legitimate operators cannot provide online poker to Australian players and players without much knowledge of the industry may have their money stolen which wouldn't happen if they could play at reputable regulated sites like PokerStars. PokerStars will stop Australians from playing on their site if they are forced to stop operating in Australia and shady companies will continue to operate. 888 already stopped Australians from playing when the bill was first introduced, but they might decide to come back to the Australian market if it is legal for them to offer online poker to Australian players. I used to like playing at 888. Their site suited me much better because the games were smaller and I was starting to get to know other regular players there and I enjoyed playing against people I recognised and could continue getting to know and I would like to do that again.

There is no other way for me to socialise from home online in a way that I enjoy and that challenges my mind. I can't do outdoor physical activities like most able Australians can. I am not into Facebook or computer games. I like to play games of skill to unwind for entertainment, ones where I can use my mathematical brain and learn how to get better and I want to play against real people I can get to know, that's the challenge I enjoy. Please don't take online poker away from me and so many other Australians like me. I don't get to do a lot of "normal" activities because of my physical limitations, but online poker doesn't require me to be physically fit and has been good for me. Nearly all the new friends I have made for many years now have been through online poker and I would miss playing poker with them if I wasn't able to. Aside from the fact that I cannot always go out to meet up with people I can also meet and socialise with friends from all over the world thanks to online poker and I do, please don't take it away.

Help the industry to get better for players, not worse. Regulate the industry. Make some tax dollars from it to do some good in the community. Keep it honest and protect players like me from untrustworthy sites. Encourage people to play games of skill with each other and not unwinnable games of chance played against casinos. There's a very big and important difference between games of skill played against other players and games of chance played against a casino and that should be

recognised. The Australia government has the opportunity to help a legitimate industry grow which could mean jobs for Australians and lots of tax dollars too, not to mention provide a safe and entertaining way for likeminded people to engage and be challenged.

I'm sure there must be some people who have problems with gambling, but the people I meet are playing for entertainment and people who enjoy a challenge like me and it's fun. I've been playing online poker for years for entertainment. I am on a low income and I have never spent more than I can afford or developed a problem with gambling nor do I see it ever happening. I personally think problem gamblers would find poker boring and hard and I can't see how it would really suit them. It takes time and patience to play and learn the game. You have to think about it, it's not really a way to win lots of money quickly like the so called "promise" of slot machines and lotto etc which is where I have heard about lots of problem gamblers.

I hope my experience can help people who don't understand how online poker works to see how it is a game of skill not chance and that it provides people with me a way to socialise and be entertained in a safe and challenging way. Online poker deserves to be recognised as a legitimate industry and players like myself deserve to be able to play on regulated safe sites that will work with the Australia government to provide a safe and honest place to play and be entertained. The UK regulated online poker and they're reaping the rewards, there's no legitimate reason why Australia shouldn't do it too, please.