



## ***Tennant Creek – Raymond Dixon***

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***10 August 2017***

***Tennant Creek, Tennant Creek Civic Hall***

***Speakers: Raymond Dixon, Elenor Dixon, Shannon Dixon, Mary James***

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Now, for the sake of the recording, if you could just please...work our way down the table, just state your name so I know who's before the panel, please.

Raymond Dixon: My name Raymond Dixon.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Thank you, Mr. Dixon.

Elenor Dixon: My name's Eleanor Dixon.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Thank you.

Janie Dixon: My name's Jeanie Dixon.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Thank you.

Shannon Dixon: My name Shannon Dixon.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Thank you.

Mary James: My name's Mary James.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Thank you. Yes, alright, whenever you're ready.

Raymond Dixon: ... What is ...and saying for the past and present of wattamolla and this country and this wattamolla country, and we are here present today and we talk behalf of...as ....people...speaking behalf of today.

Hon. Justice

Rachel Pepper: Thank you.



Raymond Dixon: The picture there on the screen, that's...we come from Mullingar community and this country is my mother country and my father country, my uncle country, and my grandfather, my ..country. We're the last ...for this country, myself and my brother and my sister and the youngest here, my daughter Eleanor, she's the one of the next generation of that country. And in that country, we are flood every year, you can see that picture there, sometimes it can get really, really, really bad, really, really full. And we cut off every...that's in the wet season. And that water, it mean a lot to us and that country. The water, it hold a lot of special things for us and some songline, our biggest one, and for healing place-

Raymond Dixon: And also that water comes all the way from Beetaloo, from on top, where the basin-

Elenor Dixon: Hello. This on the screen is the reports that we've pulled together with...that are from the inquiry, and talking about the Beetaloo and about the water, the surface, the water level on the surface, and every year, the picture on the left is what happens every wet season for us. As you can see in the middle, that's just the creek bed. So, every year, we actually have more than just what the creek holds itself. And the water, it comes, it travels from Limmen Bight, it fills up every October, I mean, every...that season in November/October. It comes from October Creek straight through Mudgee, then to Beetaloo. It fills up all the little water holes, then into Newcastle water, to Mullingar, where we live, and Longreach water hole and then the Lakewood, which is behind Elliot.

With the...for us, we sit through this wet season every year, so we actually see the water come through every single year, and it's been getting more and more...water has been just rising every year with the rainfalls and the water that comes from up north has been a lot. So, this is one of the biggest concerns that we have with the Beetaloo, it's a basin area, is that the water...Beetaloo, the water travels through to Beetaloo and then comes through our community. And that is one of the biggest concerns that we have and it raises a lot of issue for us because we live off of the land and we live off of the water as well, because we fish every year, we hunt, I mean, we hunt and do a lot of...collecting, bushtucker and everything, with the season. Because it's black soil country, there are certain plants, too, that live off of the water system that comes every season, every wet season, so it's not just us that waits for the wet season and the waters to come.

Do you want to-?

Raymond Dixon: Going back to the songline, it's one of our main things for us in our...Indigenous...our songline and it run through that water. That water carry the songline for us, it's been there for a thousand years, forty thousand or maybe more now, and it's still...we're still doing our culture and we're still with the...carrying on what's been passed onto us. It's a special place for us, and songlines is a main thing...it's a ... that we call him ...



Shannon Dixon: Talking what Raymond said, it's the truth that water coming from Beetaloo's head is real thing for us, our community, and all our .. songline ... passing through our people, so we still carry on our ..... Waters creek coming through from Beetaloo. As far ...and ceremony stuff what Raymond said, and that's true for us all, to surely take care of the place. Thank you.

Mary James : My name's Mary, I'm just a community member in Elliot, and my concern is about the water, it is a source of life for us, basically, how it's going to impact us as a whole, as human beings, with this fracking, looking at the bigger picture. It's just too much, emotionally, spiritually, mentally. We don't know what the future's going to hold, and with the songline comes the land, how the land and the environments are...impact of poison water, the surroundings and we do live off the land. Not only that, it's our health that's...looking at the bigger future, we do have a higher rate of health problems and it's just going to seem to go worse and worse.

Do we have a say, when it comes to the 99 year lease as we are being dictated to by the government? Not listening to us, with the intervention. Where do our people stand? Do the mining companies take over or are they listening to the government? Where does that leave us, as a minority? In the land that we live off of? Know what? The industry doesn't listen to our people because the land is throughout the songlines, the land belongs to other people...or do they just listen to the one group of people? I don't think they're concerned about our views, mainly. We are rich in land, but we are poor in wealth.

Elenor Dixon: The most important thing for us is that we need to be taken in consideration, because we have been here for so many years. Our culture...the word 'culture' is just a word in a blackfellow dictionary but underneath that culture is layers of survival for humanity, all of humanity, and that is because we have knowledge that is given to us and we learn it from songs, or the sound of country, for us. It is not about learning for us...we don't learn from books, we don't learn from...we don't have degrees, we've...sit on country, and country for generations from beginning of time, has passed on knowledge of survival for all of humanity.

And we come today and we don't speak to you as just traditional owners of one part of the land, we come to you as people, as humans, because everybody in our culture, in our traditions, we carry the responsibilities of all of humanity. Our people, us, the Aboriginal people of this land, have been living...we've survived for so long and we're still here, with our culture and it's time now that we get acknowledged and we share that purpose with all of people, all people, and I think that's the important thing that we need to...that needs to be told, that needs to be heard, is that we are keeping our ... our songlines, our tradition, the way it is, with the elements, with the land, with the air, we call these things the rocks, the trees. We call them wattamolla, which means they are keepers, as well as we are. In our way, in our culture, we are taught that we are just instruments, voices of the land. The trees, they do not speak, but they have a purpose, they provide the oxygen that we need to breathe. The water, 70 percent of our body is made



up of water. If our water is taken away, if our trees are taken away, then how do humans survive? All humanity, how does that even...how is that possible?

We've been living for so long, we've been seeing species of plants and animals being extinct. Lost so many. We don't want that to fall upon humans, and that is our responsibility. We come to you because we speak in a way that we want to be acknowledged for the purpose that we uphold in our traditions, in our culture, and the songlines, the waters, the water in that area, is the most important part for us. It's our lives, and it's for everyone, because that's a part of our tradition. We carry the responsibility of all humans.

Raymond Dixon: The next one is...you see on the screen there, it's about Lakewood, and that's my...grandfather country, and some of the family member not here to speak for that, but we are...still connected through our grandfather. And that country is very important again, Lakewood, it's got a lot of songline as well, and it's got a lot of culture, and it get really full, that water, through the wet season.

Raymond Dixon: Throughout the year, it still hold a lot of water.

Elenor Dixon: And it supports more than a hundred thousand-

Raymond Dixon: And it support a thousand...a thousand species of birds of all kinds. It's attraction to tourists, as well. Every year, tourists been growing and then taking a lot of ... and camping up there. It's...if fracking going to go ahead, then it's going to cost them again, it will be just real sad. ... Sad lake to see, if fracking going to go ahead now.

Raymond Dixon: The skin...the bird carry skin name as well, totem or...for each clan, each Indigenous clan, and that been passed on to us as well, from generation and even still today, we use that, our children got skin name. From birth, they have the skin name given to them and that's how we have relationship with other community Indigenous people, that's how how we connected with them and family tree.

The next one is magpie geese, it's a well-known area for that, too, and they're breeding that area, every year, because a whole lot of water. And also of course, Mullingar, also dreaming story for .... as well.

Elenor Dixon: So a place of...so all of these birds, they play a big role in our culture, in our traditions, and we are speaking on the behalf of the birds, because the birds cannot speak for themselves, so we think...we know it's important that we, as humans, can acknowledge these other creatures that share this place with us because it's not fair that we can take away their rights of living by contaminating the water system that not only is for humans, but for other species and other animals, too, as well. Most of these birds are rare birds, they only...there's some of the birds that you can only find in Australia. These birds, they play a big role in our culture, in our songlines as well.



Next one.

Janie Dixon: We have bush medicines at home, and it is very important, bush medicine for us. It grows at home and we collect them, and it's on our land and on the ground and it is very important in our bush medicines. We show it to the kids and it's also really good thing for us, bush medicine, so we don't want anything...fracking...destroying our bush medicines, our soil. That's our goal to our bush medicine, because he...it's there all the time and heals us. At home, it's everywhere.

Elenor Dixon: And, one, for example...sorry. One for example, is the ... we call it, it's one of the only plants that is and grows near the lake because of the soil. And in the creek bed, we have clay, so the creek bed is always soft, always moist, it never hardens, so it's...every year, even when wet season comes through, it...the water always goes down, but there's still a lot of water that sits underneath because of the clay we have really, really thick clay in the creekbed. On the side, we have a lot of...the soil is the black soil, it helps to...for most of our bush medicines that we get every year when the seasons after wet season.

The one that we always get is the one we call .... it's the one that we traditionally use every year for healing of stress and bones and muscle and internal organs and it is a thing...knowledge that's passed down for so many years and it's one of the things that is important for us and we have to acknowledge these plants as well, not just the animals, but because we use...there's a cycle that we go by every year, that the plants use, the animals use, and we use as well. I guess the soil in our area is one that is...that's not really found anywhere else, yeah, and so the bush medicine...the specific bush medicines we use are just in our area, which we know is important for us.

Mary James: A couple of years ago, we had a meeting down at Collingullie, in regarding the pipeline. We had groups from the south ...the north ...and we wasn't aware...we were told by the pipeline but there was some sort of confusion between fracking and drilling. The company never told us the truth as most of our people have that "yes, boss" mentality but now this time we know what fracking means, and how it's going to impact on our lives. You know with these Land Council, not being honest and telling us what this is about, therefore we don't have a say of our rights when it comes to land rights. It's always about the Land Councils. We are just being used and being controlled, to be quite honest, no say. It's so frustrating that it's took two, three years knowing what fracking really does to our land. Our water holes, back in the early days were poisoned throughout the massacre but this time around, it's with technology.

Elenor Dixon: This a report that I just pulled up. It's...talks about Aboriginal people and their culture. Aboriginal people make up most of the resident populations in the areas of the shale gas basins in the Northern Territory. Aboriginal people must be able to maintain their cultural traditions relating to the land in order that their ownership rights continue to be recognised, from one



generation to the next. Panel assessment that Aboriginal people have not yet been given enough information about the potential risks and benefits of hydraulic fracturing and that's what ...was saying.

We haven't actually been...when we were consulted, there hasn't been much information passed on, we haven't had the right information given to us, we haven't had someone to translate, someone...and NLC...haven't from my experience, and I guess from my Dad, and my Auntie, and my Uncle, NLC have always not provided the right kind of information for us. We never understood...or some of the other people who have had...they haven't been...the information hasn't been passed on properly. Fracking...most of the words in English, we don't have in our language, so it's very hard for our people to actually understand what's going on. Agreements have been made without really acknowledging what it's all about, like, it's not even...the right information has not been passed on, and we have as much knowledge for the country as anything else would. I guess we have more knowledge of the land, we'd know where there's water when there's no water. We'd know when there's things that need to be found, we've lived off the land for so many years, but this time around, it's just getting harder and harder.

Our knowledge has been pushed down and it's not fair because we need to share the knowledge, I guess, and our voices need to be heard. We need representatives from Northern Land Council to be honest, because they should be speaking up for us, or helping us, or listening to our point of view and listening to what we have to say and pass on the right message. But from our experience, we haven't had that.

Raymond Dixon:

One of my uncle...just to finish this report...one of my uncle got told that there be only one well put down on your water and he didn't understand that they're going to maybe put more instead of one, that's why...we're talking about...old man, .... as we say in our language, probably in his 70's, yeah, don't understand how many well going to be put down on that .....on that rock, on that .... I say ... in my language is the dirt and .... is rock in my language, and that ... he don't understand still today, that how many well going to be on that ..

Elenor Dixon:

I guess this is the map of the basins with the gas wells that are going to be put into the Northern Territory. The green area is the part that we come from, so obviously that's a big circle, and obviously that's going to affect a lot of people, and a lot of the land. Gas wells, I don't think it's a safe thing to want to wake up to every morning or even know that it's in the backyard.

It's...you look at the numbers, that's a lot of numbers. How is it that the next generation, will there be 67, 343 people existing after all of these gas wells are put up? I don't think so, because in our knowledge, these gas that are sitting underneath the surface, they play a big role for us. They have a purpose and our purpose is to speak for that part of that land, for the gas itself, for the things that are existing on the land. For everything in that area, I wonder how many people have come out there and stood on that land and



seen that lake and see how much the lake plays a big role in that area. Because that's just a map that shows these circles about which part of the country is going to have gas wells and that's going to be affecting, but if you was to come into the country and see it, you would see that it's not just like that, there's actually a lot of things living on there and it's a big area, it's a really big area.

It's sad. It affects us, emotionally and spiritually, it does, because this country is not just land with things underneath it. This land has its purpose, the earth has its purpose. We haven't created this earth, the earth has created itself. Humans have come out of the earth. That's in our knowledge, we have that. Our culture's been around for so many years because of that knowledge and it's important that we voice these things because the land cannot speak for itself. And the next generation cannot speak for itself. We want the next generation to come along. We want the future for our children to be our good one, to be able to wake up in the morning and breathe the air, good air, and have good water systems. It's-

Underground, the water does travel from one end to bottom and in our knowledge, we've known that actually...before we've seen it on a map, we've actually known that because of the songlines that we have. We've known that the water has travelled from the top to the bottom and it's a knowledge that's been passed down through songs.

Mary James: Paragraph...summary...it doesn't mention health. It's a big risk with land, water, and culture...where does health fit in?

Elenor Dixon: This is a summary of interim report. The estimate provided by Origin, Pangaea, and Santos suggest that the combined developments over the next 25 years could result in between 1,000 and 1,200 wells associated with around 150 pads. During the social impact assessment currently underway, our region is being asked to give their views on a development scenario in the Beetaloo sub-basin, using a model provided by the gas companies Pangaea, Origin, and Santos that suggests over 25 year period, a total of approximately 1,200 wells and 150 well pads could be developed.

Mary James : It seems to me it's all about man and greed. What about the environment, the wellbeing of others? It's just basically greed.

Elenor Dixon: We've had someone...we've had a consultant come to us and have talked to us about the assessment and talked to us about benefits and the things that we could get even if the government...they're saying that this government, if this government does not put...go through with the fracking, the next one will. How is that...like, we've met up with a consultant yesterday, that came out to Mollingar, to our community, and have said that. It's one of the biggest things that sit with us, it's because how can we trust the government, how can we if consultants come out and tell us all these things about the government? Even if we say no, the government is still going to go ahead and put all of these wells on our land? It's going to take away a lot of...everything from us.



They also said that we could benefit, we could work out some sort of...we could come to some sort of understanding with the government, where the government could give us some benefits that we could build, we could build whatever we want, we could get how many cars we want, we could have housing, our houses fixed, we could get whatever we wanted, to happen on our community and it's all money talk, really, behind that.

Mary James: The other main concern is with the 99-year lease, how it's going to impact us all. Our way of life, we don't really have a say when our community members say yes to 99 years lease. Our land has already taken off from other companies, like the cattle industry. It just shows that it's a power game between the companies and our people don't have a say. To be quite honest, our land is slowly taken off us through the damages that going to go ahead with our country. Spiritually, culturally, we won't have any cultures or the songlines anymore. It's mainly...it's the top, but what about our water underneath? So we slowly are going to be poison, what goes into the water system slowly, 'til they wipe us off the face of the earth, looking at the bigger picture-

Raymond Dixon: Also-

Mary James : Through our health.

Raymond Dixon: Sorry. Also, dividing our family as well. That's the biggest risk we see, right now, it's affecting right now. There's one time we used to sit around the campfire, my cousin, brother, my Auntie, Uncle, one third of .... come up for their country. No more sitting around the campfire. This thing take away that. Expecting it right now, we're in that position right now, and we can't get that back.

Elenor Dixon: All petroleum exploration permits on Aboriginal land, native title, ALRA, should be reviewed if landowners are contesting them. At the moment, we are being blocked by the Northern Territory government, the land councils, and the gas companies when we try to find out what agreements have been made on our own land. It is an expensive and difficult process for our people to navigate and understand, and we are being told that agreements are commercial in confidence, even when we are the recognised landowners for an affected region. During consultation meetings, the land councils are not showing our people what fracking gas fields look like in a production stage. They are only showing the early exploration stage so many of our people think fracking involves just a few gas wells. If our people agree to the proposal based on this limited information, they can then not get out of the agreement down the track if a large amount of gas is found and production starts.

The land councils and companies do not use interpreters. This is what I was saying earlier, they do not use any interpreters at any of these meetings to explain complex mining techniques like fracking and all the processing plants' waste water ponds...waste water ponds, and other infrastructure that would be needed for a full-scale gas field. This makes it very hard for



our people to understand the full picture of what is being proposed and all the risks to country. Fracking gas fields will affect the land and water of many neighbouring groups, not just individual landholders or families. It should not be a decision for any one landowner to make to put people and country at risk. We don't want the money being promised, we want our land the way it is, it's for our future generations. Our land and people are not for sale.

And having said that, neighbouring groups in our way means language groups. We are here today, ..... and ... all neighbours in this whole area. You look back at the map, you will see that in the Northern Territory, there are a lot of language groups all together in the Northern Territory. So we don't just stand here and speak for our part, our language group, our one part of that green area. In that green area is .... comes down, there's language groups from .....comes down this way, and it travels, all of our language groups are together. We don't just speak for our area, because that water system does not just represent...doesn't just come from one area. It comes from...we share that whole area. That's why we are sharing that knowledge with you today, because it's important. We're not just landowners, we share this whole country, this part of the country, with a lot of family groups, with a lot of language groups.

And even pastoralists, we have connected with certain pastoralists, we've connected on the land, we've helped each other, to share knowledge on the land and our seasons...we've worked together, done mustering for many years. My grandfather was a drover, was a police tracker, and all of these things before technology. It was my grandfather that did these things to map out everything and it was the knowledge that we passed down and we share with pastoralists today. It's important that all of us have to acknowledge that...we have to acknowledge that information and keep it going for our children and, yeah.....do you want to say anything?

Mary James:

This is our concern about fracking. We come here as one people, with our views, and our heart and soul, just to hear our plea. No fracking in this country, beautiful country of ours.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Thank you very much for coming to us and speaking to us and giving us this very powerful first-hand account of what you're concerned about and what the potential impacts could be of fracking on your country. This is a very important submission that you've made today, to the panel, very important indeed, and we thank you very much. I know that some of you have driven a long way to get here; in fact, all of you have driven a long way to get here. I recognise you from before, from meeting you before, so thank you again. I just wanted to have one comment, and then one question, and then there might be others from the panel who have questions.

First of all, in relation to human health. I think you said that there was no mention of human health in Chapter 11. We have mentioned it in Chapter 10. There's a whole chapter on human health, but maybe we need to also



mention it in Chapter 11, as well. We will think about that, but there is a whole chapter on human health in the interim report. That's the comment.

The question is, I do...please forgive me if this sounds like a stupid question, but how do you think that the fracking will cause damage to the water? What do you think will happen?

Sorry, these are important words and I want to make sure that they're picked up.

Janie Dixon: Poison in a way, with chemicals. We live off the water. When we are out bush, how it's going to affect the whole environment where we get our native bush foods and native wildlife that we depend on.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: So, you're worried about the chemicals in the water?

Janie Dixon: Yes.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: As a result of the fracking process.

Elenor Dixon: I'd like to say something about that?

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Yes, please.

Elenor Dixon: Because just a few weeks ago we had some people come over from the Dakota pipeline and we've met and sat and talked about the situation that's going on on their land and some of the Indigenous people from Canada came over, too, as well, and we've had a really good conversation, because they passed on the knowledge and experience that they've been having on their land. As we know, they are also the Indigenous people of that part of the world and they have the same knowledge as we do. They spoke about the risks and all the things...and the health, especially the health, because it has affected people as well, in so many ways, and the gas that is underneath, the shale gas that's underneath, is not for breathing. It's not the kind of gas that you would use, that we would use.

It's there for a purpose, and it's there underneath the ground, and if something would happen in one of the wells and the structure would...in our soil, it would not last. I can tell you that, because the soil is always soft, no matter what part, and once wet season come through, it will take a lot. The water does not take weeks, it comes in days. If the gas was to spread on the surface level, it would affect everything, everything.



It would not be safe for us to live there at all because the water that comes up...when it comes up every year, it comes right up to the community, it comes to the school grounds in our community at Newcastle Waters, the water comes right up to the school grounds. That's our children, and that is health risk, that is like, that is really a risk that we're taking if the government goes through with fracking.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

You're worried about the gas coming up from the ground, leaking from the ground, as a result of the drilling and the fracking-

Elenor Dixon:

Yes.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

And then getting into the water-

Elenor Dixon:

Yes.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

And that water coming and contaminating everything.

Elenor Dixon:

Yes.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Okay, I just wanted to understand that process. Thank you. Yes, I think Dr. Ritchie's got a question.

Dr David Ritchie:

Yes, thank you very much for that wonderful presentation. Just a few questions from me, because I'm going to try to get you to help translate some of the words you've used that some of my colleagues might not understand. Them pretty simple word for you. The first one you talked about, your ... would it be possible for you to explain to my colleagues ....and what the two responsibilities are?

Raymond Dixon:

We use the term as a...like a policeman.

Dr David Ritchie:

So, .... is the policeman.

Raymond Dixon:

Yes.

Dr David Ritchie:

Thank you. The second one, you talk about the ....and the singing through that. Just to again explain to my colleagues that what each leg of that ... really...there is a...that's talk...songs for the land, and just sort of talk so we understand more.

Raymond Dixon:

If we...it come...this plays a big role. One, there's a song we do initiation ceremony in our culture.

Dr David Ritchie:

What I suppose I'm getting at, just to confirm, that each of the songs about places on the land, it's about sites, it links sites up across the land, is that, would that be right?



- Raymond Dixon: Yes. You're right.
- Dr David Ritchie: So when you talk about that, it's the way that each of those places is linked across the land.
- Raymond Dixon: That's true, yes.
- Dr David Ritchie: Good. Thank you.
- Janie Dixon: Like, "....." meaning water. The songline goes from one family to the next family to the next family in skin groups, and our skin groups are embedded in us. It what holds us when it comes to land connection, spiritually and culturally.
- Dr David Ritchie: This is a bit harder one. You were talking about at the end, how the talks that you've been having up in your...Mollingar, about whether it's okay or not okay for fracking, they've divided families. Is..was that a divide along the .... or was it...is it a divide just different families? How come there's a split and everybody's talking?
- Elenor Dixon: Family groups. Neighbouring family groups.
- Raymond Dixon: Like neighbouring family, and it's been cross the border, from Top End you know? With experience there with the mining happening in that area and this one here is new one, everyone going to get infected with it. Family going to talk to each other, for sure, you know?
- Elenor Dixon: So, it's family groups.
- Raymond Dixon: Family group, all the different tribes.
- Elenor Dixon: Yes, different tribes.
- Raymond Dixon: Gas well, they're going to get infected. And their kids, our kids, generation to generation going to get infected with it. It's going to cost us for a lifetime.
- Elenor Dixon: It's the family groups that link from the waters. Because of the ..... songlines, it comes. So the family groups uphold a song there and it travels there and it travels...so the connetion is being broken because-
- Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: All right.
- Dr David Ritchie: That makes sense, yes, thank you, but all same language?
- Elenor Dixon: Same language, but some up further.
- Dr David Ritchie: Okay, now, thank you.
- Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Yes, Dr. Andersen.



- Dr Alan Andersen: Yes, thank you very much for your presentation. I just want to talk more about water contamination and so from what the panel is being told, your water would not be contaminated by gas coming up through the ground. But you also mentioned the possibility of the waste water ponds and the wet season and contamination through there and so I want to ask, if the fracking industry were forced to put all their waste water in above-ground tanks that were covered and so couldn't leak out, even during flooding, would that make you feel happier?
- Janie Dixon: No, not really. What if there's cracks in the dams?
- Dr Alan Andersen: Yes, so these wouldn't be dams, but big water tanks-
- Mary James : You can look at the future. All the flooding, as the wet season, it does flood the whole region.
- Dr Alan Andersen: Yes, I was thinking of water tanks that are covered, like you'll see around towns, you know there's big water tanks, that they couldn't leak-
- Elenor Dixon: I guess it would be, because of the environment, you'd have to really look into what...I mean, the heat can be when it's hot weather, and that's just...hot weather comes in just before the wet season and so that depends on what kind of tank, I guess, but I guess the truth behind it is that we think...we know that it's just unsafe on all levels, because it's just...it's the land...it just needs nothing on it, or in it, or under it. Even if you say that it's safe, in some ways, but knowing the land, and what happens, and the seasons, and...you'd have to live on the land to know that sometimes don't always go to plan when it's...the seasons, they change real quick and hot weather can be really intense. Wet season, the water has just been rising and rising every year and it's always coming, coming, coming, coming, in like, a day or two. It always flows like really fast currents of water comes.
- It would be like looking at these things I guess to actually know what goes on on the land because some of us, the areas that are going to have these wells and well pads, people aren't really living on the parts of the land so we can't...we don't have much knowledge of what goes on there, but the experience from the weather, it changes. So I guess it depends, but I think it would be unsafe.
- Mary James: And our region is prone for earth tremors as well.
- Raymond Dixon: Going back to the black soil. The soil, like we said earlier, is pretty weak, you know, it's like quicksand. It's pretty soft. It gets hard when it's dry season, still down at the bottom it could be a bit risky, still be wet without all the water.
- Elenor Dixon: Especially if you puncture a part, you have earth tremors, too. Dry season comes and then wet season, so you think about it, how the land moves. The land would crack in dry seasons and then in wet season, all of the cracked part would fill with water and then it would open up and then there'd be



new waterways being created. So it would be really unsafe on any terms, I guess.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Yes, Professor Hart, last question.

Professor  
Barry Hart AM:

Thank you very much for a fantastic presentation, I really enjoyed it. One of the things that I really enjoyed and I think moved me, impressed me, was with the little quote up there, because I do a lot of work down south, in the ... Basin on environmental flows the need for more environmental water. That quote of yours: "The water is alive through the songlines." Great, great stuff. I'm going to use that, if you don't mind. That's excellent.

Thanks for that photograph, we'd love to get ahold of that, that aerial photograph of the floodplain. We've not seen anything like that before, and in fact, the information that you've given us and previously, too, is really good about surface water flows, we know lots. We need to know a lot more about the ground water, which is very important, too, but so is the surface water, and we know now that a lot of it comes down in the wet season.

You've really told us very nicely the importance of the flows during the wet season, and the fact that it fills Lakewood and Longreach Billabong, Newcastle Water and so on. I'm just wondering, one...not those more permanent water bodies, but there'll be other, temporary water bodies that might only last for two months, three months, they might actually last through the dry season. Are they important to you, and if they are, why are they important?

Raymond Dixon:

Like, the waterholes?

Professor  
Barry Hart AM:

Yes, the waterholes.

Raymond Dixon:

Yes, the little waterhole, they're all still connected to the main area, they still hold that songline. And even the trees, even the birds, they're all connected.

Professor  
Barry Hart AM:

Okay.

Raymond Dixon:

There's just one billabong probably one K from that main waterhole and that one billabong still special, it still got songlines and it whole lot of special thing.

Professor  
Barry Hart AM:

Are they also good for fish?

Raymond Dixon:

Bird will eat it, and that's...we'll eat it, too. Yes, they're good for fishing, too. All fish, yes.

Janie Dixon:

The dry, you can dig up and you find water.



Raymond Dixon: Yes.

Janie Dixon: No matter where you go in this part of the country, they still contain water underneath.

Professor  
Barry Hart AM: Okay, thanks.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Thank you. Now, is it possible to get a copy of the slides that you presented? If you could, any one of those people on the table there, if you've got it on a..you can either send it...might have a spare USB stick or something like that that we can get those slides, we'd be very grateful, because I think there's some good information there, there's some important information there, and there's some information there that will find its way into the final report, I can guarantee you that right now.

Thank you again very much for coming all this way, very much appreciate the considerable time and effort that you've spent, coming here, presenting to the inquiry. We're very grateful. Thank you, and that concludes the public hearings in Tennant Creek. Thank you.