

fracking inquiry

From: Laura Robertson [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 9 February 2018 10:10 AM
To: fracking inquiry
Subject: Submission notes
Attachments: Laura Robertson.docx

Dear Public Hearing,

Thank you for the opportunity to present this morning at the hearing.

Please see attached for my submission notes.

Kind Regards,

Laura Robertson

Fracking Inquiry Notes, Alice Springs. Presentation 9/02/18

Public Hearing.

Introduction

- Thanks for the opportunity to be here.
- I would like to begin by making it clear as to why I am here today. I am here as an educator representing the voice of the young people and to talk about the experience I have had teaching a unit on fracking at local school. I teach at St. Philip's College, which is a school of the uniting church in Alice Springs.
- I am a history, geography and English teacher of year 7-12
- Ultimately here to represent the voices of the young people and what I took away as a teacher
- My philosophy as a teacher. I became a teacher because I believe in fostering critical thinking and instilling an ability for young people to question sources and evidence. I would like to share what I took away from this unit on fracking

The Unit

- Before I continue, I want to briefly give you some context about where I am coming from today.
- The year 10 Geography curriculum is a study on wellbeing, which gives students an opportunity to explore a case study that is related to inland water.
- Geography is predominantly a study of place, space, environment, interconnection, environment and sustainability and I strongly believe to make a subject like Geography engaging, it is essential to make it relevant and connected to young people.
- The idea came to be me very quickly to explore Fracking, as this is a very real issue for the people of Alice Springs and it is closely related to inland water as we get our drinking supply from the **Mereenie**.
- This is something the students of Alice Springs know and understand, it is in their backyard so it immediately caught their attention and had their interest.
- The case study was designed by me with the assistance from my Aboriginal Colleague who is also a teacher at the school.
- Across the two classes, there was a range of demographics and background.
- The key aims and learning outcomes for the unit were to get students to come to their own conclusions in response to the overarching question **"Should we allow fracking in the NT?"**
- As stated above, I believe in fostering critical thinking and in order to do this, believed it was essential to get in as many different perspectives to talk on topic as possible. As well as engaging in a number of inquiry activities in the classroom investigating the positive and negative effects of potentially fracking in the NT, we also had a range of guest speakers come in to share their thoughts on the matter, so all angles were represented. Included were:
 - o CAFFA
 - o Central Petroleum
 - o A mechanical engineer designing solar power technology
 - o We also went on a field trip to the Roe Creek Boer. We were guided around by a Power and Water Engineer who explained to us how we access our water in Alice Springs.

Key concerns

- Would like to share some of the key concerns, what I observed as a teacher of year 10 students.
- Firstly, based on our unit of study, almost 100% of the students came out against the idea of fracking in the NT. After being presented with multiple perspectives on this issue, most students were extremely concerned and opposed to the notion of fracking going ahead.
- Would like to share a couple of quotes from the students themselves.
- One student said *"I questioned both sides of the debate and what I concluded is that pursuing fracking is not worth it because there is nothing renewable energy already can't do and provide"*. She went on: *We are the future...this is our future and the older generations are making decisions that will affect us, we want to be heard on this issue"*
- Another Indigenous student said *"I think fracking is not good...they say that this is not affecting indigenous land and people, but it is. I know about many protests going on in my land from people who do not want this to go ahead."*

Similar, appearing in the Centralian Advocate in December last, my students were quoted saying the following:

- *"Either way, we concluded that fracking is not the best solution to Australia's energy crisis. We can do better."*
- From another: *"I find it a bit odd that we're presented with all these options for safe, clean renewable energy, yet we pursue the ones that will do most harm."*
- The students were also quite concerned and alarmed when hearing some information presented from Central Petroleum and the Power and Water representatives.
- For example: Engineer at the Boer fields appeared very misinformed about fracking, telling students that hydraulic fracking has already been happening in the region for many years and there were absolutely no risks associated with it.
- Similarly, Central Petroleum stated that solar energy was not a viable solution in the NT because of the hefty costs involved compared to fracking. We learnt from the solar engineer that this is far from true these days.

Conclusion

- I believe, the perspective of young people often gets lost when it comes to important decisions.
- Yet, it is essential to take on board the opinions, concerns and perspectives of young people because ultimately they are the ones who will be here long after us.
- I would like to finish by inviting you to come and talk to some of these young people. I was truly blown away by their intelligence and motivation to inform themselves on the matter and come to their own conclusions.
- They have important things to say and insights in to how they want their future to look.
- Thankyou.