



Darwin – Andrew Arthur

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Darwin Convention Centre, Darwin

Speaker: Andrew Arthur

Andrew Arthur: My name is Andrew John Arthur.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you. Thank you Mr. Arthur, when you're ready.

Andrew Arthur: I was pleasantly surprised, actually, to see that the panel has looked at the implication of greenhouse gas pollution, but I looked at the report and I was quite disappointed to see that the panel deemed that it's an "acceptable risk" for methane and GHG emissions. "Acceptable risk". If we go back to the Paris agreement, which is what Australia's commitment. It's a framework for all countries to commit to climate action, and in an attempt to hold the temperature increases below two degrees Celsius, and we joined the club. It said "mitigation targets", Australia signed up. It has robust and transparency, and accountability, rules so that each country can have confidence in other country's actions. It has a financial, technological, and capacity building support system to help developing countries to implement the agreement, and this is all on the department of environment and energy website. The Australian government website.

So Australia ... (cough) Pardon me, set an ambition target to reduce emissions by 26 to 28% below 2005 levels by 2030. So our Government says it's an ambitious target. Our Government also says, the Federal Government says, we're on track to make this record. However, if you look at the latest quarterly update of Australia's national greenhouse gas inventory, the one on the government website was in June, it actually estimated our increase to be 0.7% the past year. 0.7% increase, so we're not going down actually and we've promised to reduce our emissions by 28%, and right now our emissions are going up. That 0.7% is actually disputed by a lot of scientists because of their land-use calculations, but let's just go with that figure: 0.7% increase.

So we were able to increase our emissions, that's what we're doing at the moment. The real figure is apparently around four percent. Because of this carryover factor at the Kyoto where we're allowed to, Australia was allowed to increase its emissions by eight percent. It goes against what most other countries are committing to. So, an acceptable risk. I see the panel has estimated the amount of greenhouse gases that the industry will produce in



the territory. It's going to contribute about five percent to Australia's GHG emissions.

This is not an acceptable risk, this is a problem that's recognised. This is the foremost environmental problem that the world has ever faced. Any increase in emissions is unacceptable, and I would put it respectfully to this Panel that it would be irresponsible to allow any increase of emissions. This gas industry is not an interim industry, we don't need it, we have technologies being developed, renewable technologies, and I would urge this panel to look at alternatives to gas, to shallow gas, and to recommend that we do the good alternatives. The Paris agreement, the one that stands out for me, the last one: building financial, technological, and capacity building for our neighbours, as well as Australia. So investing this multi-billion dollars in our fracking industry, in the NT, is not an interim measure, it's a long term plan, it's going to increase our contribution to greenhouse gases. As the panel says, Australia's contribution by five percent, when we should actually be reducing our emission by 26 to 28%. So I don't know how this can be considered an "acceptable risk", and I haven't seen any justification for it really in the paperwork, that's acceptable. That's the crux of my submission, it's short and sweet, but it's the big picture.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Nonetheless, important. Thank you. Any questions? Dr. Beck.

Dr. Vaughan Beck: Thank you very much for your heartfelt expression of concern, it's genuinely noted. In terms of the greenhouse gas emissions, it is noted that, in terms of Australia, gas production of electricity, this is going back to the Finkel report now, the gas production generating electricity is projected to decline over the next 10-15 years, and in that time it's noted that gas is going to assist in the transition to renewable energy, so that there's a timeframe. There's a reduction in coal fine generation gas and an increase in renewable. So it's seen as a transition in the context of electricity generation, that's one observation.

Another observation is that the estimate there is given in absolute terms and Australia's obligations under the Paris protocol represent aggregation over all forms of energy generation, which, as you would be aware, includes electricity generation, transport, industry use, agricultural use. So there are policy settings that the Government are taking to ensure that the Paris accords are met. So it's difficult to look at, and this is part of the problem we have, looking at one particular industry in isolation, neglecting what's happening in the rest of Australian industry. So it's a complex area, and considering one component, which we've done, in isolation, does indicate that, clearly as you've pointed out, there is a five percent increase, but that's not necessarily going to incrementally add to Australia's total production, because there are other policies in place that are looking at reducing emissions. Including for example, possible restrictions on emission from motor vehicle and the transition to renewables, will also impact over that timeframe. So I understand your genuine concerns.

Andrew Arthur: Yes, I'm pointing out though, that there is no downward trend in Australia's statistics. You're talking about it, but they're actually increasing. Your point



about isolation is important because if there's other gas industries looking at opening up, not only in Australia, but around the world, then that little bit is it? Or our little bit is acceptable in the Northern Territory, this little bit's in Nigeria, this little bit's acceptable; none of its acceptable. We don't need to transition, we have the technologies. The use of this word "transition" to gas is simply an industry catch cry and its ignoring this big picture where we need to reduce our emissions. This industry will not reduce our emissions, and therefore, I put it to the panel respectfully that it would be irresponsible to suggest that the risks are manageable. We're talking sea level rise, we're talking cities disappearing, we're talking countries disappearing here. We're talking millions, perhaps billions, of people without food. You know, this is a big picture thing here and this industry is contributing to our emissions where we should be looking at far more new millennium technologies. Anyway, anymore questions because I'm out.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Anymore questions? Again, thank you very much for attending today.