



Katherine – Daniel Tapp

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Katherine

Speaker: Daniel Tapp

Daniel Tapp: My name's Daniel Tapp. I'm appearing here on behalf of myself and the community.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you very much Mr. Tapp, when you're ready.

Daniel Tapp: Okay. First, I'd like to start on the social licence issue. And most of what I got to say here is my personal experiences in the last three to four years. And the first one starts off with the social licence issue. I've been part of Frack Free survey's in the Northern Territory, from Ngukurr, Mataranka, Adelaide river, up to Coomalie. And these studies were done while presenting some evidence, or a point of view, and then giving the community several weeks to make a decision, their own decision. And then votes were taken after that. And on these communities, they range from 90 to 96% against fracking, opposed to fracking. That's on the social licence issue. And then, also to back that argument, is that you know on your consultations, the Inquiry's consultations, in these various locations when the Inquiry's had the hands up votes in favour or against. These votes were almost unanimously against. And this presented in front of the Inquiry, and in the social licence report there doesn't seem to be a reference to a direct no social licence issue in the communities.

The next one I'd like to go onto is a consultation with Traditional Owners. I was watching live stream yesterday and seeing Santos saying that communications, consultations, and everything were all basically rosy posy. Nothing to worry about. From a first hand experience between the Northern Land Council and Traditional Owners of Alawa Land Trust. I was invited to several meetings between these two groups. And one particular meeting held in Mataranka, I was evicted from the meeting. I didn't say a word. I was asked by Traditional Owners to come and help them digest what was being proposed. I was evicted from that meeting. The Traditional Owners balled up, basically, and said they wanted me back to listen. The Northern Land Council said, "No, we're not going to have any further meetings if he's here." Then the Traditional Owners said, "Well, we'll have our own meeting and we'll discuss it between ourselves while we're here."

And they had discussion, and at the end of that discussion they were totally opposed to the exploration licence granted to Hancock Prospecting on the



Alawa Land Trust. When they asked for an agreement, what the agreement said and who signed it, the NLC, Northern Land Council, said that they weren't allowed to see this agreement. They couldn't even see their own agreement and who signed it. So, I'm not sure there's too much transparency in that.

Next one I'd like to go onto is well integrity. From personal experience and report and comment on mainstream media. In the Sturt Plateau there's five exploration wells drilled there. I can't find the information on if there was any fracked, or, which were fracked and, which weren't. I've actually tried getting freedom of information under the Freedom of Information Act. This is going to cost several thousand, like five to seven thousand dollars. This was launched by the EDO in Darwin. And because we didn't have the funding we could never follow up. So I decided to basically do a little bit of my own research. In this research I found that out of the five wells on the Sturt Plateau, which were done by Pangaea. Three of those wells were classed faulty, condemned, plugged, and abandoned. Also, a water bore being drilled nearby, within 20 kilometres away on a neighbouring property was being drilled. It caught on fire when they were cutting off the casing to put the ball head on top, it caught on fire. The owner of the property, he's a pro-fracker, he told the driller not to report this to Water Resources. The driller did report this to the Water Resources. But somehow that report was watered down that it was a smell of gas. The word ignite or caught fire did not exist in that report.

So, this gives us little confidence in transparency in the whole system. And might I add, on that add is APPEA, now is one of the ads is using a fellow on mainstream media claiming that they can coexist with fracking. And he's got two fracking bores on his property and he's not concerned about water. And I mean, he's got two faulty bores on that water, or at least one, that have been plugged, and condemned, and abandoned. He's got no infrastructure on pipelines or any infrastructure at all other than one dodgy well.

This leads on then to my visits at the Amungee well, the golden egg as they call it. I first visited the Amungee well when it was first flared. That well, in my opinion, was illegally fracked because it was granted three days before the last election when they're supposed to be in caretaker mode. And as the votes came in, basically, the CLP government realised they were going to get the boot. So they granted this frack licence without consent or anything. A month or two later that well was fracked. A friend of mine driving past there saw it off the side of the road at night and contacted me. I went down there the next day and had a look, had video footage of it flaring. What did look strange to me at the time was the above ground waste pond for the waste water still looked like it was being constructed, it was only half done. So, I'm not sure what they might have done with the waste water.

That afternoon when we went back to Mataranka, there was a big mob of trucks there. When I say a big mob, four trucks, road trains, three tanker loads. Got told by the truck driver where were they going, what were they doing. He told me, "We're waiting on directions. We're going out to the Amungee well to cart fluid off." I said, "Where you carting at?" He said,



"Well we were supposed to be going to Queensland, but now they're talking about New South Wales." So, don't ask me what that means. That was what he told me. And I have a witness there that witnessed that, and that was Toll Transport.

Sorry, going on further more on that well, the next time I visited I took a friend with me because also, another friend ... this friend drives trucks on that road quite regularly. He's an anti-fracker. And he said, "Come down here and have a smell of this place. It stinks." I went down there a couple of days later. When I walked into the gateway, parked on the road ... because there's a big water hole right on the road there. And I walked in. And about half way in there was unmistakably stinky smell of Sulfur, Sulfur dioxide I'm led to believe. I don't really know the science on what chemicals. But I've been told that it's most likely Sulfur dioxide.

As we walked in, this is probably about two or three hundred metres away from the actually well head on the outside of the perimeter of the well. Along that fence there's also three vents, little short vents about this high. And they all seemed to be rattling, as in breathing. You could hear them rattling. I was silly enough actually to have a little smell, to see what I could smell. I couldn't smell anything. There was no Sulfur smell, or the rotten egg smell, around there. We went over to the well head to see if the smell was coming from there. I walked out, and then we got the smell again in the same area as when we walked out. And on that same visit, here is the picture of a dead wallaby. I mean, that could be anywhere, obviously. But I can assure you it's at the Amungee site. And it's right beside the fence. That's on the inside of the well area. You can see the barbed wires there. I'm on the outside. And I'm led to believe that sulfur dioxide causes organ failure in humans and animals. And to me, that kangaroo there looks like it's had some sort of haemorrhage and basically couldn't control its bowels. So, that's basically that picture there.

So, that was that visit. And then just before Christmas I decided ... just because I wasn't doing much. I decided I'll go down and have another look and see what's happened down there. When I got down there the first thing I noticed was the well head had changed. It used to be ... it originally was just a big round well head. And then now there's a big cross. I'm led to believe they call it the Christmas tree because there's presents for everyone under there apparently. Anyway, the Christmas tree ... and now it's also got a bunch of brand new gauges on it. Brand new taping, thread tape, big red tags on it. Danger, danger, danger. So, basically they've changed that well head. I'm not sure exactly what dates they changed it. This all happened over, probably, a six-month period last year.

Since then, I found out that Inquiry panel has visited there. And I'm just sort of putting two and two together that, basically, they've changed this well head to get rid of the smell and move the plug. Basically, cleaned the site up. And the report yesterday, headed by Lock the Gate in Darwin, talking about this failed well, or deformed well, supports my personal argument that there is a failure there. And not only is there possibly a failure in the well integrity itself, but we've got a fault line running through that well,



geological fault line. That fault line, on the wells best practises, should not be anywhere near a well. So, this golden egg, and this category nine well's best practises unbreakable well, is failing and a fault line through it. And we're getting mainstream media, the golden egg, million litres or whatever it is a day fruit for all. And it's actually failing and it's not producing. And in Origin's reply yesterday they said they didn't put that in the report because it might interfere with their shareholders' opinion. And this is said in the recording that I listened to on live stream, that it was about shareholders, that they didn't want to put it in there to bluff shareholders. So, they're putting their shareholder's fortune in front of our security, our water and food security. I think this is just outrageous.

All we hear about in the spin from government and industry is about how secure these wells are, which I've got no faith in. Science tells me that all wells will fail. There's nothing you can do about that. In time, they will all fail. And 120 recommendations, regulatory recommendations, to me with mitigating, minimising the risks, is basically doing that. Minimising the risk that is inevitable, cushioning it, putting regulations so industry can dodge this way, that way. It's not my responsibility. That was the no baseline data, so we've got no evidence. The companies have got no insurance over their own actions, no guarantees. So, then if the government forces me to sign a mandatory land access agreement, who's responsible? Is it the government for making it mandatory for me to sign this agreement that I don't want to because I know it's going to fail? Or is the industry? So now we've got two people. And I don't want to go suing the government, that's suing the taxpayers, our money. Suing ourselves for something we didn't want in the first place. So, I can't work that one out.

Then we go on to government and industry saying about these jobs and economics. Well, on the jobs one, how the bloody hell are we going to ... excuse the language. But, how are we going to work here if we've got no water and no industries to work in. Fisheries are gone, pastoralism gone, water, agriculture. If they're all gone, where are we going to work? They might have a few jobs for these 500 workers over the next 25 years, predominantly fly in and fly outs. What's the thousands of people in the Territory, what are we going to do? We're going to have to move interstate. Can't go to Queensland. They've got frack fields there, and having the same problems should be the biggest green light of all. And we've got Origin Energy down there in court with Sally McDowell now, whistle blower. You know? With these breaches of law, regulation, whatever you want to call them. And they're breaches because they can't regulate it. They cannot physically, scientifically regulate it. Accidents happen, science says it will fail eventually. Whether it be now, or in 100 years. They will all fail.

The jobs one, just getting back on that. There's very rubbery figures there that keep ranging from 500 to 13,000. I think, Justice Pepper said that there was lack of information to confirm this at one stage. I'm led to believe it's around the 500 jobs over 25 years, which is peanuts. I mean I've employed-

Hon. Justice Pepper: Per year, per year.



Daniel Tapp: More than 2500 people in the last 25 years.

Getting back to the insurance and guarantees, all of this gets poured on us with no insurance, no guarantees, no rights. We've got to co-exist. And then, finally, is the economics. Very rubbery figures been floating around for the last four or five years ranging from 450 million dollars to 850 million dollars. Over how many years, I don't really know. They're the rubbery figures. These rubbery figures were quoted as rubbery figures. Now we're back down to 35 million dollars per year. And whether it be 35 million dollars or 100 million dollars, 2 billion dollars, what value do we put on our environment? Now water, we've got nothing. We've got nothing at all without water. Nothing at all, we've got to pack up and go, end of story. And the risk is more than likely. Mitigating the risk, or minimising the risk, in my opinion is just not acceptable. And it's worldwide. There's more than enough evidence worldwide to say that this industry should be banned. And I recommend strongly that you recommend a ban. That's about my bit.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you very much Mr. Tapp. I just want to make a few points, I guess. First of all, the first question I have and then a few points of clarification. So, the five wells on Sturt Plateau, which you said that there were a number that had been plugged and abandoned and were possibly faulty, if I've understood your evidence correctly, your submission correctly. You said you did your own research, what was that research?

Daniel Tapp: That was research that I believe Lock the Gate done ... sorry, it wasn't Lock the Gate. It was Don't Frack Katherine done a couple years ago, a lady by the name of Charmaine Roth.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Okay.

Daniel Tapp: That has left now. And she would have that documentation somewhere.

Hon. Justice Pepper: She's previously presented to the Inquiry before.

Daniel Tapp: Yep.

Hon. Justice Pepper: All right, thank you for that. Again-

Daniel Tapp: And might I just say on the fire bore, on the Sturt Plateau, that I was saying the bore, there was a ... well, it wasn't a report, apparently. It was just a comment, a media release, why the CSIRO. And his opening line was, the scientist or whoever he was from the CSIRO, I can't even remember his name. I'm not a real good name rememberer. But, he said in his opening line was, "although not familiar with the geological formation of this area, it is quite common and natural for this to happen." Well I spoke to the bore driller, a fellow that I've known for years, Donny Web-Smith. He told me after 45 years of drilling Northern Queensland, Northern Territory, and western Australian that he's never seen this happen in limestone and basalt. Tight rock, it's possible. Never in limestone or basalt. And might I add that limestone country there is caves. Caves, God only knows where they go. So,



you know, it appears to me that this gas is coming from most likely one of these faulty wells nearby.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Okay. Thank you. Just a couple points of clarification just in relation to the jobs. But I understand the submission, which you make, which is well, there's really not that many jobs that are going to be created by this industry. And the figures go up and down depending on report you look at. But, just to correct you, it was 524 jobs averaged out per year over 25 years. So it's not 524 jobs in total for 25 years. That's job years, as an average of jobs per year. And that's based on the ACIL Allen estimate of 670 wells.

Social licence, again, we didn't ask Coffey to determine whether there was or was not a social licence to operate in the Northern Territory. If the government lifts the moratorium, what we ask them to do is effectively we ask them to assume that there wasn't one, and how could that be obtained? We ask them to build a framework. That's what we ask them to do, that's what we've delivered.

It will be up to ... I think it's our job as the panel to make sure we put in the report and it is in the interim report. And it's the executive summary of the draft final to record that certainly to the communities that we've gone to, and the people who have presented before us, that ... I think I'll just wait for the jet to pass. And I'll use the same words that were in the interim report that overwhelming the people who have come to these meetings and presented before us have been against fracking. We will record that. That has been recorded, and that will continue to be recorded because that has continued to be the case. So, that's our job. We didn't ask Coffey to do that, they didn't do it. That's our job.

And finally, in relation to the material presented yesterday by Lock the Gate, you would have been aware of the exchange that took place. You would have been aware of the subsequent explanation by Dr. David Close on behalf of Origin who clarified the provision of those two diagrams. And you will have also been aware of the fact that this panel has taken the view pursuant to his explanation, based on his explanation, that in fact the misdeeds that were attributed to Origin by Lock the Gate yesterday were absolutely wrong. They were false. Lock the Gate was provided with the opportunity to clarify on their remarks. They did so. They were provided with an opportunity to apologise. They did not do so. And that's where the matter has been left.

Do you have any-

Daniel Tapp: How do you find this information to be false? Just because of Origin said so?

Hon. Justice Pepper: It's not the information contained in the diagrams that is false. It's the characterisation that was attributed to the provision of those two documents that was given yesterday to the panel that does not appear to be correct.



- Daniel Tapp: On the principal of the report is that, basically, talking about transparency and lack of trust. Why wasn't this report produced publicly, you know, through the Inquiry, by government or by industry, in the front page of the Northern Territory news? For argument's sake, instead of putting on there this million dollar gas well, why didn't they put on there that it's being deformed and a bit dodgy?
- Hon. Justice Pepper: Well, again, I would urge you to listen again to the explanation that Dr. Close provided to explain that-
- Daniel Tapp: Well I have-
- Hon. Justice Pepper: Hang on Mr. Tapp, please let me finish. To explain that data. I don't know why it wasn't ... I can't comment, obviously, on the internal processes of Origin. But what I do know, and as I've said yesterday, that, that material was in the public domain certainly as of 25th of May last year, for all the world to see.
- Daniel Tapp: Without the references to the picture, without the references.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: No, no, no. The diagram that was put before the panel yesterday by Lock the Gate, that has been in the public domain since the 25th of May 2017. And that was pursuant to a request for further information. Dutifully answered by Origin from the panel on the 18th of April 2017.
- Daniel Tapp: So, if it was available on the 25th of May, then why wasn't this ... it was available. But why wasn't it being said and promoted as rather than a very one-sided view that well integrity never fails. This is the whole argument about science and well integrity, and it's basically been shovelled down the side.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: I understand the submission, I understand the submission. Do we have any further questions? Yes, Dr. Jones?
- Dr. David Jones: You mentioned the smell of ... the bad smell. On a chemist side, I can probably suggest that it might be hydrogen sulphide, rather than sulfur dioxide because hydrogen sulphide is quite a toxic gas. Were there any waste water ponds on the site when you smelt them?
- Daniel Tapp: No, no. It's all clear. And roughly where the smell was, was where I'd seen the above ground waste pond. It was actually sort of, basically, the well head and it was before the well head ... it was between the well head and the main road where the smell was. It appeared to me that it was coming out of the ground, or sitting on the ground, or something because there was nothing at the well head or in the vent. So, I don't know what was coming out of the vent. But they were definitely producing something.
- Dr. David Jones: Because, certainly, you can get those conditions in waste ponds where you get a bit of hydrogen sulphide produced. So that's why I was seeking that clarification to see if we can try to get a better idea of the source.



- Daniel Tapp: That picture of the kangaroo in the background there is the well pad. And as you can see, there's nothing left, just the well pad.
- Dr. David Jones: No, we only saw the well here, nothing else.
- Prof. Barry Hart: So just clarifying, it was the Amungee well?
- Daniel Tapp: Amungee well. Yep.
- Prof. Barry Hart: Thank you. I thought so.
- Hon. Justice Pepper: Any further questions? Oh, yes, Dr. Ritchie?
- Dr. David Ritchie: Mr. Tapp, just to clarify, the meeting that you told to ... is your words to 'be evicted from'. That was convened by the NLC Act at Jilkminggan or Mataranka?
- Daniel Tapp: There was two actually. One at Jilkminggan and one at Mataranka.
- Dr. David Ritchie: About Hancock Prospecting leases up on the Land Trust land?
- Daniel Tapp: Yeah.
- Dr. David Ritchie: Now, was that meeting the one where they were actually looking for an agreement or not? Or was it subsequent to an agreement already being signed?
- Daniel Tapp: Subject to an agreement already being signed.
- Dr. David Ritchie: Okay.
- Daniel Tapp: And they were looking to begin exploration, and they were basically informing the traditional owners what they're intentions were.
- Dr. David Ritchie: Okay. So, by the time that meeting took place, there were already an agreement in place between the Traditional Owners and Hancock Prospecting that had been done through a process that happened before? Okay. I just really wanted to check because it was just your comment later that they asked to see the agreement and then the agreement they asked for was the one that gave the underlying approval for that work.
- Daniel Tapp: Well, what had actually happened was ... like I said, the agenda for the meeting was put up on the public notice board. And, obviously, people were notified in various different ways. And that it was to talk about exploration. Some of the Traditional Owners said, "Well who said they were going to do an exploration? We don't know. We was in agreement. We don't know anything about it." So of course, a little bit of division in there because no one knew who signed it. No one knew. There was one Traditional Owner that said that she thought she'd signed it. But, none of the Traditional Owners were produced with any sort of documentation, or any ... and as far



I know that's still today, that no agreement has been ... and apparently, it is law, or legislation, whatever you want to call it, that the Northern Land Council and government, I assume, that they don't have to show it. They can show it, but they can't give it. They can't give that agreement to a Traditional Owner. And then that traditional owner can't take it to another lawyer and get a second opinion on it.

Dr. David Ritchie: And again, just for the record, it's the case ... I gather, that the reason that you asked to attend the meeting by traditional owner is because of very long standing, basically growing up with a lot of those people?

Daniel Tapp: Yeah.

Dr. David Ritchie: Yeah, so you would just go along as another pair of eyes and ears to ...

Daniel Tapp: Yeah.

Dr. David Ritchie: Okay.

Daniel Tapp: And I employ a fair few of those people.

Dr. David Ritchie: Okay.

Daniel Tapp: And, yeah, sort of ... so I see them quite often.

Dr. David Ritchie: Okay, thank you.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you. Any further questions? Again, Mr. Tapp, thank you for coming on today. And thank you for coming on for all of the meetings that we've held here and your continued participation in the Inquiry, it's certainly been very much appreciated. Thank you.

Daniel Tapp: Thank you.