



## ***Darwin – June Tapp***

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**Katherine**

**Speaker: June Tapp**

June Tapp: June Tapp.

Hon. Justice Pepper: When you're ready.

June Tapp: Okay. My submission is mainly about social licence.

Hon. Justice Pepper: Can you perhaps just move the microphone down and speak into it? That's great. Thank you.

June Tapp: Mainly about social licence. And I thought that CSIRO report on the social licence to operate in the Beetaloo Basin and Northern Territory would produce the numbers of people for and against fracking in the Northern Territory, or a bit of a rough idea. The report only generalises on assumptions on how to approach social licence if the Labour government decides to go ahead with fracking.

There is a significant number of people who oppose fracking and are asking for a complete ban. The only reason we are here today is because the Northern Territory Labour government was forced into a moratorium because of the demands of so many people in the Northern Territory to ban fracking. Moratoriums and/or a complete ban were made by all major organisations in the Northern Territory and thousands of individual people, too, have signed petitions of protest fracking. Amongst the many groups, the major groups were the Amateur Fishermen's Association, the Cattlemen's Association, town councils, farmers, horticulturalists, the tourist industry, various Aboriginal groups from regions all over the territory, people from Alice Springs, Darwin, Maningrida, Ngukurr, Mataranka, Borrooloola, Batchelor and many others. Marches have been held all over the NT to protest fracking. We do not want a dirty, fossil fuel industry in the Northern Territory.

The inquiry panel has noted in one of its reports that it says, "In 2014, a global survey of perceptions of corporate social responsibility, in business, found the oil and gas industry to be one of the least trusted sectors." That's certainly true for the Northern Territory. "Second only to the tobacco industry. Of 24 countries surveyed, Australia had the highest level of mistrust of the oil and gas industry, equal with France," which in 2011 became the first country to ban fracking. "Correspondingly, a high proportion of Australians thought that the oil and gas industry needs more regulation. To some extent, this widespread



mistrust is influenced by a growing global anti-fracking sentiment, found to be prevalent in Australia and Canada and the UK."

So, you've noted that there's this growing global anti-fracking sentiment. Why do you think this is? It's because people have seen what happens to communities, land, and the waters that have been fracked. Many countries have banned fracking. I have to keep this a bit short 'cause I only got a few minutes. The Chief Minister of the Northern Territory has said we have plenty of excess gas in the Northern Territory, and Nicole Manison, the NT Treasurer has said that even if the moratorium were lifted tomorrow, it would be at least 10 years before the Territory felt any benefit.

Why introduce a dirty, fossil fuel industry in the territory? Worldwide, fossil fuels are on their way out, or they should be. There are bans on fracking in Victoria and parts of New South Wales, a moratorium in the NT. In South Australia, the [inaudible 00:04:05] and Liberal Party has promised bans on fracking if elected and the newly elected WA [inaudible 00:04:11] government also has promised some ban in WA. My point being, of course, that the Northern Territory isn't the only jurisdiction which would like to see it banned.

Ex-senator Marissa Waters calls the oil and gas industry the great fossil fuel rod. At an inquiry into hydraulic fracturing, held in Katherine, it seems that for the first time people are now waking up to the fact of the manipulation of the Australian taxpayer's five billion dollar, multi-national gas company. Australia's gas production has never been higher. The lack of cheap domestic gas is due to gas companies' over investment in export facilities. Rather than take responsibility for their bad investments, the gas industry has forced up the gas price and then attempted to scapegoat rural communities with deep concerns about their environment, water, fracking.

This inquiry is slightly different. This inquiry has become centered on the Beetaloo area. Fracking Beetaloo would be the "foot in the door" for the dirty, fossil fuel industry to mine all over the territory. 80 to 90 percent of NT land is covered by exploration licences. The Northern Territory has a long history of mining legacy catastrophes left behind by big mining companies. We've got Glencore at McArthur River, has a bond of \$450 million, slightly less. People say the bond should be a billion. Mt Todd near Katherine has an estimated cost of \$120 to \$200 million to be cleaned up. All over, the debt of billions across the territory for the NT taxpayer ... there's no chance of this ever being able to afford. It's just disgusting.

I will say one more page. A little bit about Origin worth \$33 billion and paying no corporation tax. I haven't got enough knowledge if anybody asks me any deep and probing questions, I wouldn't be able to answer them. Quickly before I run out of time, the role of the NLC: I would like to really particularly bring this to the inquiry in acting as a front for the big gas companies. Keith Rory from Borroloola said of the mining companies ... he's an Aboriginal man ... he said, "They give them money. They give them motorcars. They use us Aboriginal people to divide and rule." These are people, and here particularly, that I have actually spoken to. Another Aboriginal woman from the VRD area said to me that the Northern Land Council facilitates mining companies' spruikers. She was



speaking of her opposition to fracking. She said, "I don't want to be known as someone who sold out. I don't want my grandchildren to think I sold out." One of the people from Borroloola said, "They're like white ants. They use us to divide and rule.

What is happening in the Northern Territory is what is happening in Queensland with Adani coal fossil fuel mine. People in the bush are trying to fight off the multi-billion dollar fossil fuel companies like Origin and Santos, like the people of Queensland are trying to fight off the multi-billion dollar Adani mining company.

Why would the Northern Territory government even begin to contemplate introducing long-term 20 year, 40 year dirty, fossil fuel industry into the Northern Territory when everyone acknowledges that renewables are the future? That's it. What's the point?

Hon. Justice Pepper: Thank you very much, Miss Tapp. I saw that you were reading from a document. Are you happy to provide a copy of that to the-

June Tapp: Yeah.

Hon. Justice Pepper: ... and we'll put that up as a submission? Thank you. Any questions? Yes, Dr. Jones?

Dr. David Jones: Yes, perhaps. In your opening remarks, you talked about one of the reports. I think you mentioned the CSIRO report or the Coffey report and you thought it would have actually given a pro-anti type of distribution.

June Tapp: Sorry, I didn't hear what you said.

Dr. David Jones: In the first part of your presentation you mentioned a report, I think it was the CSIRO report you specifically mentioned, saying that you had expectations that that would provide an assessment of the foreign or gains distribution, but it didn't. Could you elaborate on that?

June Tapp: Sorry, I missed the last bit again.

Dr. David Jones: Could you elaborate on that? I gather you feel that this content was deficient in what your expectation was.

June Tapp: Yes, I just thought that it would have got a mention, you know? Gee wiz, we've been five years marching and holding meetings and making little banners and sewing things and holding silly bacon and egg breakfasts, and there's those people. They're not even paying any corporation tax. It's just a big battle, but who knows. Does that answer your question? Not really?

Dr. David Jones: Well, I think it does in the sense that you had the expectation that this would actually kind of pull the people and say..

June Tapp: Yeah, and say, "Down with the gas companies."



Hon. Justice Pepper: Any further questions? Again, thank you Miss Tapp You've been here ... this is your third occasion presenting to the inquiry. You've taken the time and effort to engage with the inquiry, and the inquiry certainly appreciates that. Thank you.

June Tapp: Thank you.