



## ***Darwin – Maritime Union of Australia***

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**2 August 2017**

***Darwin Convention Centre, Darwin***

***Speaker: Thomas Mayor***

Thomas Mayor: Okay, so my name is Thomas Mayor, I'm the branch secretary of the Maritime Union of Australia, whom I'm representing today. Also, present of the Trades and Labour Council of the Northern Territory. So, I just wanted to put on the record that, the Maritime Union absolutely has great concern about that fracking may come to the Northern Territory and are very interested in seeing that this commission of inquiry is thorough as possible and we would prefer that it is not allowed because basically as Maritime workers, we feel that this may affect our jobs. We work in the offshore industry and economic assessments and that will be made should consider further pressures on offshore exploration, where our members work. As far as also jobs go, I'm aware that many companies, especially in remote areas are using FIFO workers, certainly more than territorian workers who are people that live here.

I don't believe that the fracking industry will be any different. Despite what they may claim, we have other extractive industries here, mines such as the Groote Eylandt, gemco mine, that employs a great majority of people from interstate and therefore the economic benefits for those jobs do not stay here. As a Torres Straight Islander and an activist in aboriginal and Torres Straight Islander advancement and justice as well, I'm also concerned that commitments made by the fracking industry, as others have been known to do, will not be delivered. The jobs that they report to be creating, are unlikely to be highly qualified jobs. There is plenty of occasions where, I have seen the commitments made to the people that haven't been delivered in practical outcomes. Further, whose dollars are spent? I heard that a bit earlier.

It's, I'm concerned that it's the tax dollars, tax payers that ultimately participation for the infrastructure that is set to be created by these sorts of projects. I have real concern that the commission must consider the record there on who actually pays for the infrastructure for these projects. And I don't think that the risk, that fracking brings to the water table, into the environment, I don't think that the risk is low enough to justify that. Further, the aboriginal people that live on those lands where the fracking is, so the front line for anything that goes wrong. We know from, that we know in our



sad history that they are the last to be heard, as well. When things go wrong and things continue to be worse than third world country conditions in some of those communities.

And that if something goes wrong, and the water is poisoned, then those people will be the ones that suffer, and those are the people that'll be there for millennia to come. I noted the comments said just before about the integrity of the capping of the wells and I would say what guarantee is there, that these things will never deteriorate and leak, rather than what evidence is there, that they will. I just to want to end with, it's just a matter of trust I suppose. Jobs they're committed to and not delivered by these industries in my experience, often. There's commitments for consultation, they generally don't happen. The adherence to regulations, you can put the best regulations into place but what guarantee is there that those regulations won't be breached.

How will they be monitored? And is the risk that they will be breached based on historic practises of some companies. What is the risk versus the trust factor? Lastly clean up. The world head integrity or the capping, would require monitoring. We have commitments to returning environments to the way that they were before. We have legacy mines, all over the territory, where commitments have not been met in that regard as well. I understand that no industry goes ahead without some risk and risk management but for fracking, people that I represent and the people that are now in the community are not prepared to take that risk, when it comes to fracking.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Thank you very much, and thank you for being so succinct. That's commendable, I have one question, which is you expressed concern that any onshore unconventional gas industry could take jobs away from the offshore gas industry, which is your constituency. What sort of jobs do you envisage will be taken off the offshore gas industry?

Thomas Mayor:

So, the offshore extraction of gas and oil involves supply, vessels going to and from the offshore facilities. There are jobs on the actual facilities as well. So, cargo supply, maintenance, equipment supply, is all done through the stevedores, the wharf here at east arm. Then the offshore workers on the vessels and on the facilities.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

It just strikes me that there is probably a different skill set and different job descriptions. I'm having trouble, and I'm not trying to be difficult, I'm generally having trouble to see what jobs would flow from one industry to the other industry. They seem like different jobs.

Thomas Mayor:

We need a couple sea fearer's, and so you don't require sea fearer's to carry things to the onshore. They man the ships and the docks really. So, they are jobs that won't exist if there was only onshore extraction of gas for example.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Oh, I see and so you're worried that the onshore would completely replace



the offshore.

Thomas Mayor: Yeah, yeah and then it cost stuff to. If that pressure, the price of oil and gas was low enough that, there was that competitiveness, well you would think that onshore gas would mean, as far as cost effectiveness goes, but my point being risk as well.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Yeah I understand. I understand the risk component. It would certainly help us if MUA could perhaps provide us with a few more details of how they envisage the, set the drop losses, flowing from one part of the industry to the other. I'm still, that would certainly affect, information could be provided to us and by way of estimates for example. That would be of huge assistance.

Thomas Mayor: Yeah, if I may also, alternative forms of energy, solar, even offshore wind farms. That would be great. Our members would love that.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Wouldn't that take away from your jobs as well?

Thomas Mayor: No, but it'll be putting back as well.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: How would onshore solar, not take away from your jobs?

Thomas Mayor: The onshore construction, the maintenance of the, there would be vessels required to service those regardless.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Thank you.

Thomas Mayor: And also supplies to be loaded off the dock.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Sure, thank you. Any further questions? Yes Dr. Andersen?

Dr Alan Andersen: Yes, if I may, I understand how you're representing your particular unions interest, just wondering if you took a step back and talked about the broader NT communities interest. How would you respond to that? In terms of looking at the broader community interest in whatever job, whatever mind by that.

Thomas Mayor: We have an interest in jobs. I think there's a real problem with our economy. Absolutely that's true, that's acknowledged. There's a problem with our population as well. We need to grow as a territory. Our communities need to grow for them to be successful and for opportunities to be created for our children. But I don't think fracking is the answer. Not for the risk and not for the public sentiment either. There is a problem with jobs staying in the territory. The mine that I use as an example, is 480



workers and a great majority of those workers fly mostly to Cairns, or Queensland, generally.

And they take their money with them. They are high paying through enterprise bargaining that the unions has done for a long time. Well paid jobs, that mostly all of those wages are going into state almost. There are very few and the companies might claim that they're doing well because they've got a dozen but I still think that's very few compared to what could be done if there was more effort made. There is very few jobs for the indigenous people as well. Most of those jobs are in the rehabilitation section of department of that mine. So, our interest is in fixing those things to create jobs. Not having something that could risk, that very important element that we need to live, which is water. I hope I answered your question?

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Any further questions? Again, thank you very much, we thank the MUA for appearing today. We're very grateful thank you.