



## **Annette Raynor – Hearing Transcript**

*Please be advised that this transcript was produced from a video recording. As such, the quality and accuracy of the transcript cannot be guaranteed and the Inquiry is not liable for any errors.*

**8 March 2017**

**Knotts Crossing Restaurant, Katherine**

**Speaker: Annette Raynor**

Annette Raynor: I'd like to thank the inquiry for the ability to make this submission, and I apologise up front for being emotional, and I have tried to stick to the facts, and be unemotional, but this subject is extremely emotional for most people on both sides of the argument. I am here today before you not as an expert but as a general Joe from the street, but a general Joe who is an intelligent person, and who has personally completed over 200 hours of research on this subject on both sides of the argument. To give you a little bit about me, I served my country for over 20 years in a classified area, so I am quite well aware of the standard responses to most of the hard questions that given out. I have been an extremely proud Aussie that is maybe not always politically correct. However, I have never stood up on any subject before. Having said that, I became aware of the unconventional oil and gas industry in 2012. At that time, I wrote to multiple elected members with my concerns and questions, to which I have copies of them all here.

I have not received one response where they even tried to answer one of my questions or my concerns. I may not be an expert, but I am not a third rate citizen either, and I do not accept that my voice is not worthy of being heard, or that it's not valid. Now having said all that, I turn to the terms of reference this inquiry is under, and I find two reoccurring themes that I'd like to address. One is the term scientific evidence. The second is the term adverse impacts, and then I will address two other issues that are stated continuously around this industry, that being the first robust regulatory frameworks. And the second one as best practices. Let's start with scientific evidence. Well, in a nutshell, there is none, and you might ask why. That's because in all the places and areas this industry is operating, no baseline data is available to compare this to anything. Hence, no scientific evidence is also available, and of course, good old-fashioned common sense does not apply.

Let's look at the term adverse impacts. Now if there's no scientific evidence, then how do we know whether there's any adverse impacts? Quite simply, we don't, and once again, common sense does not apply. If we truly want scientific evidence to assess the adverse impacts, then nothing less than a total ban on this industry needs to be put in a place immediately until enough time has passed to truly gather evidence on this industry, but I'll come back to that. Let's now look at the other two terms. Firstly, robust



regulatory frameworks. These only work in the industry when the industry itself complies with them, and someone is there to enforce them. My problem here is that I have never seen this happen successfully in any industry, so why do we all think it's going to happen now, especially when we take into account where this industry is going to be operating? It's out bush, it's hard to get to, and there's not going to be somebody standing over their shoulder.

Secondly, I move to best practise. The only comment I can make about those two little words is this statement. Today's best practise is tomorrow's worst nightmares, and I'll give you two examples of areas that meet all those four terms and went horribly wrong. The first one is asbestos. This was the best thing since sliced bread. It was completed under best practice for the time period, and it had robust regulatory regimes, with no adverse impacts, and no scientific evidence to the contrary. Well we know how that turned out, and people are still fighting for compensation today. So I'll move to the second example, and that's the PFASs and the PFOs. This stuff was mainly used in firefighting foam, but it was so great we wrapped our food in it, we covered our furniture in it, and we even dunked our clothes in it. It was that safe. But here now in Katherine, and across Australia and other parts of the world, we are facing contaminated water and soil, and no one can answer the questions of how long this stuff will last, how do we get rid of it, what damage is it continuing to do, or any other question you may pose about it.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Okay, the source of that music, and shut it down, or at least turn it down would be good. Not sure that you envisioned your presentation being set to music, but that's what's happened. Do you want to yell through it, or do you want to wait?

Annette Raynor:

It's up to you maam. Okay. I pose these questions, and I ask why? The answer to that is nobody knows why. Nobody knows. All we know is we can no longer drink the water, we are not supposed to eat the food that is grown in the contaminated soil, or been watered by contaminated water. That includes we're not supposed to eat eggs from chooks that are drinking the water, and this is right here at our doorstep. And once again, the PFOs and PFAs were done under best practice for the time period. They were also done under a robust regulatory regime. This stuff was found it had no adverse impacts, and there was no scientific evidence to the contrary yet again. Now this is only two examples, and I'm sure there are many, many more, but I hope that's made my point clear. We don't know what the issues and/or the problems of the unconventional oil and gas industry will bring, so why are we, with no baseline data, no scientific evidence, jumping back into the fry pan yet again? After all, the gas isn't going anywhere.

Just because we can do something does not mean we should do it. Let's wait for the science to come in. It only took 10 years for the PFAs and PFOs to raise concerns. I admit, it took quite a bit longer for asbestos to do the same, but why do we continue to keep making the same mistakes over and over again? The Northern Territory is already dealing with multiple legacy mines with some major issues. Let's truly look at this. Let's look at the



bigger, complete picture. Let's look at it with the planet in mind, and not as a quick perceived fix to a perceived problem, which we will have to sort out later, if we can sort it out at all. I keep hearing and being told about the gas shortage, and how many jobs this industry will create, and how much money we'll all make. Well I'm sorry, but those statements are extremely misleading at the best, and at the worst, they're just plain lies. For starters, most of the gas, especially what they're talking about here in the Northern Territory, will be exported overseas, so I don't quite know how that helps our perceived gas shortage.

Secondly, a large percentage of the jobs will be fly in, fly out. They'll specialised, so once again, how does that help the Northern Territory people? Thirdly, Australia as a whole, let alone the Northern Territory, will only see a very small monetary value from this industry, and according to the Australian Institute research and the Northern Territory government's own figures, and I'll stay just with the Northern Territory government's figures, the government paid mining companies 407 million dollars. Let me say that again. 407 million dollars over six years for assistance and funding. Admittedly, that was all mining companies, not just fracking. That relates, and is it equivalent, to 80% of all the royalties the Northern Territory government received in that time period. They gave it back. So I ask, how does this help us? How can this be a huge income boost? I'm not the smartest tool in the toolbox, but that just doesn't seem to make financial sense with a great outcome to me.

Now I admit, I'm 100% against this industry, and not just for the Katherine area, not just for my backyard, not just for the whole of the Northern Territory, but I'm against it for the whole of Australia. However, I have only touched, I haven't even scratched the surface of the issues that worry me about this industry, and due to the time frame, I'm going to quickly just list the overall topic headings to some of the items that concern me, and these are in no particular order. Groundwater contamination. Our aquifers all overlap here in the Northern Territory, so once one's contaminated, that means over time the rest will be contaminated. What about surface water contamination, soil contamination, fault lines that we have here in the territory and how that's going to affect us? What about our ecosystems, our ecosystems, rather? What about the infrastructure, or should I say the lack of it? What about the community impacts, our house and land prices? What about the aboriginal sacred sites? What about the impacts to tourists? What are they going to do with this waste that they create, and how are they going to transport that?

What about the health impacts that we keep hearing about, and not just to us dumb humans, but to our livestock, our wildlife, and our domestic animals? What about my landowner rights and the leasee rights, and the aboriginal land rights? We have none under this. What about the well integrity, and I'm not talking about tomorrow, or next week. I'm looking 20, 50, 100 years and beyond. Who's going to guarantee it then? This list goes and on, but I'm going to stop here and simply state, this industry has no social licence to operate. This is one of the things all the companies state on



their own websites that they must have to succeed. I pose to you, if there is no social licence, no scientific proof one way or the other, then how can this industry be given the green light to go ahead? What kind of legacy are we leaving the next generation and the generation after that? I know none of these issues will show up until long after I've left this planet, but that doesn't make it right. I could pose numerous other issues and questions, but once again, to stay within time restraints, I'll finish with this. When we have no clean air to breathe, no clean water to drink, no clean soil for agriculture or horticulture to survive in, no wildlife left, and a landscape that nobody wants, what happens then? I thank you.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Thank you very much. Now Ms Raynor I noticed you've got a typewritten document. Are you willing to provide that to ...

Annette Raynor:

Yes.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

It would be wonderful if it could be emailed, because then we can distribute it to the panel.

Annette Raynor:

Panel? Yep. I can do that.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

If that's your only copy, that'd be great as well. That's fine. If you're happy to provide that, that's excellent. Thank you very much. I've got a couple of questions, if you could. First of all, and this is my ignorance. I know what PFAS is. What's PFO?

Annette Raynor:

It's the same thing. It's just a slightly different make of it.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

I know what PFAS is used for, so what's PFO used for?

Annette Raynor:

It's in the same firefighting funds. It's used for firefighting. It's the same sort of thing. I do have-

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

It's a firefighting retardant, or?

Annette Raynor:

Yes. It's the firefighting part of it. They're the same thing. They just call them different names.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Okay. Thank you very much for it. My second question then is, you stated that in your opinion, there's no social licence for this industry to operate. Again, what do you mean? What's your definition of social licence, because I've heard many different definition, because I've heard many different definitions?



Annette Raynor: Definitions? My definition is that they don't have the support of the communities. Most communities that I know of, at least in the territory, they do not have the support. They have been numerous people get together and tell them they don't have support at the one of the biggest marches we had against them. If you looked at the people that were age, we ranged in age from very, very young schoolchildren who knew what they were talking about, and I think the oldest person that was there was 92. We came from all walks of life, all backgrounds, all religions, and I guarantee you if you had asked any of us to agree on what colour the sky was that day, we would not be able to. We were so different. The only thing we do all agree on is that we are against fracking, and that's been from the years I've been involved and done the research of this.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Thank you, thank you, Dr. Jones.

Dr. David Jones:

Just following up on that particular theme as my first question. You said there's lack of scientific evidence, lack of baseline data, and things like that. If that information was to be obtained, to what extent might that modulate your perception about social licence to operate, or is that something that's quite separate from that issue?

Annette Raynor:

I think social licence is quite separate to any of the other issues. Social licence, I see, is us turning around and saying, "Well, we may not necessarily agree with you, but we stand by you." They don't have even that, let alone anything else.

Dr. David Jones:

The second question I guess comes back to the economics. You mentioned that 407 million dollars of royalties was paid over six years, and by whatever means, most of that was transferred back to the industry. What evidence do you have to support that?

Annette Raynor:

It's on the Northern Territory government website, and I also have a piece of paper from the ... I can't remember who I said did it now, but whoever I said did it. Also, I have theirs. The Australian Institute. I have their paperwork here that proves that as well.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Again, if you're willing to make that available to the inquiry, to us, that would be a huge benefit. Thank you.

Annette Raynor:

It's scribbled on.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Thank you very much. Yes, Dr. Andersen.

Dr. Alan Andersen:

Ms. Raynor, I appreciate and acknowledge the strength of your feeling, so my question is, to what extent of the issues your concerns specific to fracking itself, or you would have most of them, even if there was no fracking, but it was still your more conventional drilling and extraction?



- Annette Raynor: I have had no problems with the conventional industry, and like I said, I've never stood up on any subject, and it is the unconventional oil and gas industry that I have a huge issue with, totally, 100%.
- Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Yes, Ms. Coram?
- Ms Jane Coram: Thank you, Ms. Raynor. You referred to the lack of scientific evidence, and particularly the lack of baseline data.
- Annette Raynor: Yes.
- Ms Jane Coram: I'm just wondering what you would consider to be credible baseline data. For example, how long would it need to be collected for, and who would need to collect it? In some instances, companies collect data. Some instances, government does. What would actually constitute credible baseline data?
- Annette Raynor: I think it's got to be independent, totally, 100% independent, and it's got to be long enough to prove one way or the other. We're seeing, we're hearing reports about the shale fields in America, and the issues they're having. However, because no data was taken or the data that was taken is all commercial in confidence that nobody can get, you can't prove scientifically one way or the other. It's got to be done up front for a start. It's got to continue to do, and we need to look at these areas that have done it. They've done it for 20 years over there, and they are having huge issues, and I know people that are actually living with those issues personally, but they can't prove it scientifically because the data that was done is commercial in confidence that they can't get. And you can't prove it when you don't have access to that.
- Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper: Yes, Dr. Ritchie.
- Dr. David Ritchie: You're not the first person has talked about the level of emotional involvement that comes out of this debate, and in a small community, that can have quite a profound effect. I just invite you to make any comments you like about the effects of that locally, for good or bad, bonding or division, whatever, however you like to go with it.
- Annette Raynor: I personally haven't seen a huge amount of effects one way or the other. I think it's brought some people closer together on this issue. It's driven a wedge between others. I've found that I cannot go to certain businesses now. They will not allow me in the door because I have stood up and said I'm against it.
- Dr. David Ritchie: That's pretty significant.
- Annette Raynor: That's few and far between, but that has happened. I think the hardest thing, and it's not just in the community, I think the hardest thing is the fact that being anti it, you've got to put up with all the downgrade, and name



calling, and your all sorts of things, whereas nobody's turning around and saying that to somebody who's for it, so.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

I just want to follow up on that. If there's no social licence, and you've defined social licence as no community support, then why is there that division? If the community is overwhelmingly against fracking, then why are there businesses that you're not going to, there is name calling, there is ... That suggests to me that in fact there may be some community support for it.

Annette Raynor:

There are a few people in Katherine that, and I can only talk about in Katherine.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

Yeah, of course. Of course.

Annette Raynor:

There are a few people in Katherine that support this 100%. I won't say we're all 100% against it, but there are a couple people, I personally know five people, that are 100% for this. I'm sure that that number's a bit further along than five. However, I also personally know over 1,000 people against it, so.

Hon. Justice  
Rachel Pepper:

That's it from questions from the panel. Thank you very much for coming on today. Thank you very much for doing such a detailed presentation, and you'll give those documents at least to any of those people sitting there, which will be wonderful, and again, I appreciate your time and commitment. Thank you.

Annette Raynor:

Thank you.