

TILMOUTH ROADHOUSE Pty Ltd

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COMMUNITY AFFAIRS REFERENCES COMMITTEE

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Inquiry into the Low Aromatic Fuel Bill 2012

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your letter regarding the submissions you have received in relation to Tilmouth Well.

We appreciate the opportunity to respond to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation inquiry into the Low Aromatic Fuel Bill 2012.

Let me begin by stating that we, the owners of Tilmouth Well commend the Government and other organisations efforts to minimise or eliminate substance abuse in the Community.

However, the reality is that there is no single solution to the abuse just as there is no single substance responsible. Furthermore, as you are aware every Aboriginal community is different and not all communities are dysfunctional or suffer from the abuses. A blanket approach does not appear to be the solution. Unleaded fuel is not the only demon we are trying to deal with.

With regard to Tilmouth Well, the roadhouse was established in 1990 as a commercial business to provide food, accommodation, communications, general services and fuel to the travelling public.

Much of our business model is based on a “value-add” from ancillary services such as food and accommodation, not just fuel sales.

The majority of unleaded fuel is sold to customers who request non opal fuel. This includes tourists, contractors, government and mining personnel.

Our policy is to not allow container sales from the unleaded bowser. Sales must be in the tank only.

Replacing unleaded with opal fuel would have a detrimental effect on our profitability, based on our current business model.

On numerous occasions we have clearly stated to Senators, Macklin and Scullion our willingness to participate in the program and sell Opal fuel. However, with monthly fuel deliveries only, the roadhouse has limited storage capacity and fuel tanks and therefore cannot facilitate another fuel type.

We have always maintained that we would be willing to sell Opal fuel if the Government was prepared to supply and install a bowser and tank to accommodate it.

We would also undertake to maintain sniffable fuel under lock and key, for those customers who demand it.

If legislated, we would exclude local aboriginal people from purchases of sniffable fuel.

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Unfortunately, due to our location our business has been a convenient target for people who wish to believe that Tilmouth is the “root” of the petrol sniffing problem.

Most cars today have a full tank range in excess of 600 kilometers. All outlets for sniffable fuel (including the conveniently forgotten Premium unleaded) within a 600 km radius from Tilmouth are numerous. This includes the towns of Tennant Creek and Alice Springs, not to mention most other roadhouses and some aboriginal communities. Should these not also be an important consideration in the way forward?

Roy Chisholm
Tilmouth Well

18th July 12