

13/9/2012

To:- Opal Fuel Bill inquiry

Please present my comments to your Senate Committee.

I can't say you have no idea, because I don't know your background. I don't know if you have ever left the City. I don't know if you base your judgements on real experience or just what someone has told you, either at university or per a phone conversation.

I have seen firsthand by living and working in different Communities for many years how the government has botched the mandate they gave three company executives at the top of [REDACTED] [or the like] & \$50 million dollars of our Tax payers money to gain control of community stores and in the allotted time had only secured about 3 stores and maybe at the last minute a group of 14 stores. Even though they failed dismally, they were given another bucket of money. For what ?????????????? To go into opposition to what we do extremely well, and no cost to the Tax Payer! The difference is, we are working in the field. I have never seen or heard of the decision makers living in a community to see firsthand where all the problems are.

I have been told repeatedly that changing to Opal Fuel usage was not mandatory. Therefor your committee request – *“The committee asks you to note that further submissions will be posted on the inquiry*

website and you may wish to continue to monitor these submissions for adverse comment about your organisation.” Sounds a little bit like a threat & by your own admission is only an inquiry.

I have been falsely told the Government is ADVERTISING to PROMOTE the use of OPAL fuel. I have never seen a single advert on TV.

In our discussions about changing to Opal fuel we are quite willing to change and all we asked is that the Towns around us, also only had Opal fuel. Meekatharra is our main concern and as a Business decision, after all 1/3 of our Aboriginal population either live or go there every week to purchase Alcohol or food or do Banking business & possibly get Fuel.

Yes the other store in Town does have Opal fuel, but because most travelling people and some locals think that Opal is inferior, we secure a lot of Unleaded sales and none of that is for Sniffers.

I can agree that children need activities to keep them amused but those activities are not happening here??????? WHY???????

Until there is no such thing as them & us, or Black and White, or Aboriginal or White and just “Australian” and just one set of rules we will not be able to grow as a nation. If there is a Drunk person and society needs to penalise that person, do so, without affecting what I do. Too many times we are unable to purchase Alcohol, yet you can walk out of your office and purchase a bottle of wine to take home just because you feel like it. Because I am living and working remotely we should not be disadvantaged. How would you like to have to come to our town to purchase Alcohol just because you felt

Like a drink. Yet I am being told that I have to go to a Town like yours to do so. Even if you came to a Town like ours, you could not buy full strength Beer, or any Alcohol in Glass [which covers all wine and spirits] just because.....

We are working hard to provide healthy food at a reasonable price. We encourage people to buy Fresh Fruit & Veg to cook themselves instead of City wise living where you can be as lazy as you like and purchase "Obese-Making food every night". At our last community we halved the "Diabetes Rate" in 3 months of Fresh Fruit & Veg instead of Takeaway.

You have told us that we are free to make a decision, but in doing that you would like to threaten us by sharing our comments and calling them adverse.

We would like to see Meekatharra take on Opal fuel and then we would have no objection, because fuel sales would not be affected. We are a town, just like them and make money from tourists travelling thru. Last time we checked the Doctors here were not treating any people for Petrol Sniffing. For all other purposes we are treated as a Town and not a Community [we are not eligible to receive "Transactions at ATM's fee free.] We are going to be part of a National Highway once the road between Wiluna & Meekatharra is sealed, with travellers from the Eastern States coming thru here on their way to the Kimberly & Pilbara Regions.

We feel strongly about our population being treated as one. The Aboriginal's here are good people & we like dealing with them & they like us. There are bad and out of control people in every society.

How come there are 2 sets of unemployment form's, one page for an Aboriginal & no waiting time & they can get a Cheque replaced, the same day , just by saying they lost it. An out of work "Australian" has to fill in 20 pages, wait 6-8 weeks and can't get a cheque replaced or cashed on the same day. We are not Racist otherwise we would not be working here, we just want the same rules to be applied to each Australian citizen! Is that too much to ask? A decision doesn't need to be a feel good one, just the right one. I am not a "Do good-er" by any means but do like to think that our actions while working here bring the Town together and help locals improve their quality of life and not have to drive 200klm to another store to Shop. Public opinion says we have one of the best stores in the land so to concur you would need to visit and would be happy to show you around.

We trust that this will not be just another nail in Wiluna's coffin.

KIND REGARDS,

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