

PO Box 4212
Alice Springs NT 0872
3 July 2009

Mr Roy Chisholm
Tilmouth Roadhouse
Tanami Road
Via Alice Springs 0872

Dear Mr Chisholm,

I was interested to hear you speaking on ABC Radio this week regarding Opal fuel.

For many years we have been concerned about petrol sniffing. My wife was a nurse in Central Australian communities including Docker River in the 1960s and 70s, before it became an issue. We then spent 12 years in the Kimberley and on returning to Alice Springs at the height of sniffing in the 1990s it was very sad to hear of so many families that we knew well who had lost young people or had been effected in other ways during this time.

With the introduction of Opal to communities south of Alice in 2005 there was a great reduction in petrol sniffing but some Unleaded fuel was still coming in. When Yulara and roadhouses on the Lasseter and South Stuart Highways changed to Opal a year later, the impact was dramatic. One South Australian community had regularly seen 45 to 50 serious sniffers from the ages of about 8 to 18. We were there last week and local community leaders were telling us that 3 years on they still have no sniffing.

We commend you for not filling jerrycans with unleaded fuel. Tilmouth may be receiving requests to continue selling Unleaded, but for the future of young Aboriginal people we would urge you to consider a complete change to Opal.

My wife and I were working at a WA roadhouse when it removed Unleaded fuel in 2006. There were many concerns both from locals and travellers about whether the new fuel was going to be suitable for all petrol vehicles. BP, the Commonwealth Department of Health who were subsidising Opal and the Automobile Association of NT were all able to guarantee the safety of Opal. There is now wide acceptance of Opal right throughout Central Australia and a claim has never been made against BP in the four and a half years since it was first introduced to communities.

We are sure that you will receive widespread support for a change and the location of your roadhouse will remain of great value to anyone travelling the Tanami Road.
- We can recall the days when there was no fuel or supplies between Halls Creek and Alice Springs.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

David Hewitt.