



**The Hon Warren Snowdon MP**  
**Minister for Veterans' Affairs**  
**Minister for Defence Science and Personnel**  
**Minister for Indigenous Health**  
**Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac**

The Hon Kon Vatskalis MLA  
Minister for Health  
GPO Box 3146  
DARWIN NT 0801

Dear <sup>Kon</sup> Minister,

I am writing to you regarding the rollout of low aromatic fuel and the recent introduction of a Commonwealth Bill by the Australian Greens Party to mandate its supply.

On 1 March 2012, Senator Rachel Siewert introduced the Low Aromatic Fuel Bill 2012 (the Bill) to the Commonwealth Senate. The object of the Bill is to reduce the harm to the health of people living in certain areas from sniffing fuel. The Bill introduces offences for Constitutional Corporations supplying and transporting regular unleaded petrol in certain regions. The Bill has been referred to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 21 September 2012. The Committee will also hold hearings, the first taking place in Alice Springs on 24 July 2012.

As you know, the Australian Government has a well established Petrol Sniffing Strategy (PSS) which provides a comprehensive regional approach to addressing problems associated with petrol sniffing. Under the PSS, there has been great success with the voluntary uptake of low aromatic fuel. There are currently 123 sites supplying and positive engagement is ongoing in new regions. While the voluntary rollout requires extensive consultation with communities and fuel retail sites, it is important to secure community engagement and ownership of petrol sniffing as an issue.

The Government's current approach to expanding the roll out of low aromatic fuel is based on overcoming storage and distribution issues to support the further voluntary rollout in northern Australia. The Government is also collecting more comprehensive data on the impact that low aromatic fuel has on the prevalence of petrol sniffing which will inform future decisions on petrol sniffing policy. In addition, an evaluation of the Australian Government's PSS is being undertaken, which will also help inform future policy direction.

The Government has taken this approach following the results of a cost benefit analysis conducted by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies which concluded that the community benefits of mandating low aromatic fuel exceeded the costs, both in the short and the long term. However, the study also noted that the conclusions were based on limited data on the prevalence of petrol sniffing and that fuel storage and distribution issues needed to be addressed to enable a full rollout of low aromatic fuel and the enforcement of any mandated requirements in northern Australia.

I am aware that there are some fuel retailers who refuse to supply low aromatic fuel in the Northern Territory, but I am also aware that there is existing legislation in your jurisdiction, the *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act (NT)* (VSAP Act) that can assist in managing issues relating to volatile substance abuse.

In my view, a significant benefit of the NT VSAP legislation is that the development and implementation of local management plans is driven by the community. Communities are united through the development of the plans and work together to act against petrol sniffing as it arises. This ensures that strategies developed to address volatile substance use under a management plan are targeted to the needs of individual communities and that the response to volatile substance abuse is holistic rather than focused solely on supply reduction. It is difficult to understand how Commonwealth legislation will have a greater impact than this existing legislation.

I am interested to know your views on the introduction of Commonwealth enacted legislation to control the supply and transport of low aromatic fuel in your jurisdiction. The issue of petrol sniffing and the rollout of low aromatic fuel is not limited to the Northern Territory, therefore I will also be consulting with Ministers from the South Australia, Western Australia and Queensland to seek their views on this matter. If appropriate, the Commonwealth will look to host a cross-jurisdictional forum to discuss a consistent legislative approach to petrol sniffing including low aromatic fuel.

I would be happy to discuss these matters with you further.

Yours sincerely



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20 JUL 2012



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**Minister for Veterans' Affairs**  
**Minister for Defence Science and Personnel**  
**Minister for Indigenous Health**  
**Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac**

The Hon John Hill MP  
Minister for Health and Ageing  
Minister for Mental Health and Substance Abuse  
GPO Box 2555  
ADELAIDE SA 5001

Dear  Minister

I am writing to you regarding the rollout of low aromatic fuel and the recent introduction of a Commonwealth Bill by the Australian Greens Party to mandate its supply.

On 1 March 2012, Senator Rachel Siewert introduced the Low Aromatic Fuel Bill 2012 (the Bill) to the Commonwealth Senate. The object of the Bill is to reduce the harm to the health of people living in certain areas from sniffing fuel. The Bill introduces offences for Constitutional Corporations supplying and transporting regular unleaded petrol in certain regions. The Bill has been referred to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 21 September 2012. The Committee will also hold hearings, the first taking place in Alice Springs on 24 July 2012.

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The Government's current approach to expanding the roll out of low aromatic fuel is based on overcoming storage and distribution issues to support the further voluntary rollout in northern Australia. The Government is also collecting more comprehensive data on the impact that low aromatic fuel has on the prevalence of petrol sniffing which will inform future decisions on petrol sniffing policy. In addition, an evaluation of the Australian Government's PSS is being undertaken, which will also help inform future policy direction.

The Government has taken this approach following the results of a cost benefit analysis conducted by the South Australian Centre for Economic Studies which concluded that the community benefits of mandating low aromatic fuel exceeded the costs, both in the short and the long term. However, the study also noted that the conclusions were based on limited data on the prevalence of petrol sniffing and that fuel storage and distribution issues needed to be addressed to enable a full rollout of low aromatic fuel and the enforcement of any mandated requirements in northern Australia.

As you may be aware, the Northern Territory has in place the *Volatile Substance Abuse Prevention Act (NT)* (VSAP Act) that can assist in managing issues relating to volatile substances. The VSAP Act includes provisions for the development of community management plans which can include banning the use of unleaded petrol other than low aromatic fuel in a number of communities. I understand that the South Australian Coroner has recently recommended that South Australia consider laws to deal with petrol sniffing, similar to those which apply in the Northern Territory.

In my view, a significant benefit of the VSAP Act is that the development and implementation of local management plans is driven by the community. Communities are united through the development of the plans and work together to act against petrol sniffing as it arises. This ensures that strategies developed to address volatile substance use under a management plan are targeted to the needs of individual communities and that the response to volatile substance abuse is holistic rather than focused solely on supply reduction. It is difficult to understand how Commonwealth legislation will have a greater impact than local state or territory legislation.

I am interested in your views on the introduction of Commonwealth enacted legislation to control the supply and transport of low aromatic fuel in your jurisdiction. In addition, I would like to know if the South Australian Government has made any progress towards considering the Coroner's recommendations. The issue of petrol sniffing and the rollout of low aromatic fuel is not limited to the South Australia, therefore I will also be consulting with Ministers from the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Queensland to seek their views on this matter. If appropriate, the Commonwealth will look to host a cross-jurisdictional forum to discuss a consistent legislative approach to petrol sniffing including low aromatic fuel.

I would be happy to discuss these matters with you further.

Yours sincerely



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**Minister for Indigenous Health**  
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The Hon Dr Kim Hames MLA  
Deputy Premier  
Minister for Health  
28th Floor, Governor Stirling Tower  
197 St Georges Terrace  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Deputy <sup>Kim</sup> Premier

I am writing to you regarding the rollout of low aromatic fuel and the recent introduction of a Commonwealth Bill by the Australian Greens Party to mandate its supply.

On 1 March 2012, Senator Rachel Siewert introduced the Low Aromatic Fuel Bill 2012 (the Bill) to the Commonwealth Senate. The object of the Bill is to reduce the harm to the health of people living in certain areas from sniffing fuel. The Bill introduces offences for Constitutional Corporations supplying and transporting regular unleaded petrol in certain regions. The Bill has been referred to the Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee for inquiry and report by 21 September 2012. The Committee will also hold hearings, the first taking place in Alice Springs on 24 July 2012.

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In my view, a significant benefit of the VSAP Act is that the development and implementation of local management plans is driven by the community. Communities are united through the development of the plans and work together to act against petrol sniffing as it arises. This ensures that strategies developed to address volatile substance use under a management plan are targeted to the needs of individual communities and that the response to volatile substance abuse is holistic rather than focused solely on supply reduction. It is difficult to understand how Commonwealth legislation will have a greater impact than local state or territory legislation.

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**Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Centenary of Anzac**

The Hon Lawrence Springborg MP  
Minister for Health  
GPO Box 48  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Minister

I am writing to you regarding the rollout of low aromatic fuel and the recent introduction of a Commonwealth Bill by the Australian Greens Party to mandate its supply.

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