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“What does it mean to you if the MPSF was closed? How would it impact on you personally?”

I personally would be impacted by the closure of Mintabie township because I lived there in 2008 and I know many of the residents.

I have read the 2017 Review of the Mintabie Lease & Mintabie Township Lease Agreement with disbelief and disgust. It recommends that “the Mintabie township be closed as soon as practicable after a decision to do so by both the **Minister for Mineral Resources and Energy** and **Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation** (the management of the area described in the Mintabie Lease to revert to APY)” as “an appropriate action to protect the interests of the APY residents.”

I am personally impacted because I thought the South Australian government would be concerned about all citizens, both indigenous and non-indigenous. I cannot agree that the removal of all non-indigenous is “an appropriate action to protect the interests of the APY residents.” The 2017 Review of the Mintabie Lease & Mintabie Township Lease Agreement is one-sided. It deliberately paints a negative picture of the town and its inhabitants. The oldest resident of Mintabie has a street named for him here in Coober Pedy in recognition of his contribution to our community. Worryingly, all of the negative comments and pictures used to describe Mintabie apply equally well to Coober Pedy. This review made no mention of the positive aspects of living in Mintabie.

I am wondering why the Labor Department of Communities and Social Inclusion Minister was not more involved in a decision about the destruction of a community and the proposed removal of its residents who have expressed their wish to remain in their homes and may have nowhere else to go.

I am disgusted by The 2017 Review of the Mintabie Lease & Mintabie Township Lease Agreement because it is seriously flawed. To demolish a community based on its findings is injustice previously unimaginable in a country like Australia. Getting rid of Mintabie is not a solution to the problems. There are undesirable elements in the APY communities generally, regardless of non-indigenous residents. I know; I taught in Pipalyatjara in 1997. Minister Dan van Holst Pellekaan said, “Whilst this decision was not an easy one to make it has been upheld for the benefit of the APY as the landowners and to minimize any impact the lease was having within their community.” (MEM18D0059) His ‘sympathetic’ regard should for the interests of both indigenous and non-indigenous residents.

“What else should be taken into account?”

1. The social effects of forcing law-abiding people out of their homes should be taken into account. Take into account the effect this sort of action has on the larger community in terms of trust in the government.
2. Cost to the government should be taken into account. Mintabie people have looked after themselves for decades, receiving very little support from government part from the school. Compare the government costs of running the other APY communities.

Submitted by Sue Britt 