



Standing Committee
Environment and Public Affairs
GPO: Box A11
Perth WA 6837

4th September 2012

Petition No 166 – Cessation of the Chlorination of the Busselton Water Supply

Dear Committee Members

*The following is my submission in relation to Petition 166 – the “Children’s Petition”.
Please be advised that I have not taken this complaint to the Parliamentary
Commissioner for Administrative Investigations.*

I helped to create this petition because the people in Busselton, the CHILDREN in Busselton, have been suffering since the chlorine was added into the water supply. They had this forced upon them against their will, yet I am told we live in a democratic country. The children of Busselton have put their names along with mine to support this petition as it is our only way to let you know how we feel.

I don’t have chlorine at my house as we live on a farm. That does not stop me from fighting to restore Busselton’s water supply for everyone else. Our water comes from groundwater and the rain, and five generations of my family have enjoyed this water without ever being sick from it. We wanted to move into Busselton to live but we could never live in a town with a water supply that is chlorinated, especially when so many people are getting sick from it already.

Last year when we heard about the planned chlorination, I realized that no matter where we lived, we all went to school in Busselton and nearly all of these schools are located close to the Water treatment depots. My school is one of the six schools closest to the plant in Queen Elizabeth Avenue. That made me want to say “NO!” We would be forced to drink it at our school drink fountains and those toxic chemicals would be mixed and stored very close to our school. I also read in the information from Busselton Water that they would send stronger (double) amounts out from the treatment plant so that it reaches the people’s houses further away at the ends of the pipeline – this means our schools would get the most powerful doses.

I created a petition last year so that the kids could say how they felt. Three hundred and seventy eight students signed that petition and I took it to the office of Busselton Water. They did not listen to us.

Now the chlorine is in all the water and no one can avoid it unless they have a lot of money to filter it back out or buy bottled water. But there are more people who can’t afford to buy fresh water or full house filters.

The water now smells bad and tastes even worse. It is a nasty colour. That does not seem hygienic does it? The strongest chlorine is hitting our schools and nearby houses. The people of Busselton are getting sick from this water and yet the experts think that adding chlorine will protect health! That does not make sense. I have seen and read about health issues caused by the chlorine - earaches, sore throats, itchy or

PUBLIC

dry skin and hair, and frequent asthma attacks. People are getting asthma from taking a shower!

I know of children who have illnesses which are caused by the chlorine – they did not have these before April 2012. Before chlorination no one ever got sick from drinking Busselton's water. Busselton Water state that chlorine is needed to protect us from a harmful bacteria, but I have also read that this bacteria has never been found in our water supply - EVER. Why chlorinate then and cause so much unhappiness? How can we kids trust adults to make decisions that affect us when we see so much that is not true?

We created this new petition to again ask you to listen and to help us. These are our voices – 969 of them and I am sure there are many others who did not get to sign.

My best friend at school, is very unhappy with the change to the water. She told me "I drink cordial, and fizzy drink. I try not to drink water, but sometimes I get so thirsty, I'm forced to take a sip, and it tastes horrible and makes me feel sick."

Another friend was drinking from the water fountain at school and I asked her "How can you drink that?"

And she replied - "It happens when you have nothing left to drink – you are forced to have this." This friend has been asking for me to bring her bottles of water from my home (where we have rainwater) and I have done this three times but now a lot of the kids are asking me and I cannot bring water for them all. That makes me sad.

Last week an 11 year old friend who used to be my neighbour, came to stay at my house. She kept going to our drinking water over and over. My Mother and I could not believe how much water she was drinking, as if she was very thirsty. She said "I miss the farm so much – the water in Busselton is disgusting and I can't drink it."

People in Busselton are getting sicker. We have to do something about this! Their pet fish and birds are dying – the photos and stories about this make me very upset. Cats and dogs and other pets are sickened by the water, or won't drink it so they are becoming dehydrated. They know it is bad for them. Soon the water from gardens and taps will affect the waterways and wetlands. Then it will start killing frogs, aquatic life and other native creatures. That is very wrong! We are meant to be protecting the environment, not adding more poison to it.

Since April, people have been buying more and more bottles of water so there are many thousands of plastic bottles being thrown out each week. That is also bad for our environment! Who is going to fix this in the years to come?

Thank you for hearing my petition in Parliament, on behalf of all the children who signed it, and thank you for considering my submission. Please restore our beautiful water to the way it once was and let us children have a voice in our future!

Maya Spilsbury-Slee (12 years old)