

TRANSCRIPT

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Inquiry into the CFA training college at Fiskville

Melbourne — 18 May 2015

Members

Ms Bronwyn Halfpenny — Chair

Mr Tim McCurdy — Deputy Chair

Mr Brad Battin

Mr Simon Ramsay

Mr Tim Richardson

Ms Vicki Ward

Mr Daniel Young

Staff

Executive officer: Dr Greg Gardiner

Research officer: Dr Kelly Butler

Witnesses

Mr Matthew Lloyd, and

Mrs Beccara Lloyd.

**Necessary corrections to be notified to
executive officer of committee**

The CHAIR — On behalf of the committee, I welcome Beccara and Matthew Lloyd to this hearing. I just have to go through a few formalities. First of all, all evidence taken at this hearing is protected by parliamentary privilege as provided by the Constitution Act 1975 and the provisions of the Parliamentary Committees Act 2003, and is protected from judicial review. Any comments made outside the precincts of the hearings are not protected by parliamentary privilege. All evidence given today is being recorded, and you will get a copy of the proof of the transcript. I will now pass over to you. Take your time. If you need a break or whatever, just let us know and we can do all that too. If you are happy, we will ask you some questions at the end.

Mrs LLOYD — We are just going to give you a bit of background history about us. We purchased our property, Hamills Lane, in 1997, to breed prime lambs and live there. We built our house, we got married and we had two little girls, and we established a well-known and successful name in breeding prime lambs. We started with a few sheep and just kept breeding and breeding them and ended up with a flock of — how many, Matt?

Mr LLOYD — Twelve hundred breeding ewes.

Mrs LLOYD — Twelve hundred breeding ewes, and we breed a lot of sheep and always sell them for very good prices. In 2009 we started a farm gate business called Field to Fridge, where we cut and pack and sell the meat, as well as always selling the lambs through the live market. We started off a farm gate business, where we would cut and pack the meat fresh from the farm gate to the people's door. We have a photo album. I do not know if you want to pass that around. We are in the papers a lot with our business, and that is really good. I will pass this around. You can see what we used to do.

In 2012 there was all the media speculation about the contamination of the CFA. People started talking and asking us about our meat. It is a small town. Everyone knows everyone; everyone knows where we live. Then there were signs; Matt noticed signs being put on our property. Our property is the boundary to Fiskville, and Lake Fiskville water flows into our big dams at the back of our property. Matt noticed signs being hung on the fences saying, 'No swimming in the dams', 'No fishing', 'Not allowed to go in the water'. Matt just thought, 'This is not right. We know that our stock drink the water', and we wondered what could happen if it got into our stock. No-one knows about these chemicals. So we decided the right thing to do was just to close our meat business, Field to Fridge, because we just did not know what we were giving to people.

Mr LLOYD — We had heard that it was in the rabbits and the yabbies, so if it is in them from eating the grass and drinking the water, there is a fair chance it is going to be in the sheep. So I rang Fiskville. There was a note put under the door saying that there was contamination in Fiskville and in the water.

The CHAIR — Someone put a note under your door?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

The CHAIR — An official note or just a CFA note?

Mrs LLOYD — A CFA note.

Mr LLOYD — A CFA note, yes.

The CHAIR — Sorry; I interrupted you.

Mr LLOYD — That is all right. You put one and one together and you work out that if their rabbits on their side of the fence are going to have it, our rabbits on our side of the fence are going to have it, and our sheep are drinking the water, eating the grass and so on. So I rang up Martyn Bona from Fiskville to see what was happening. He said, 'I'll get back to you'. Next thing we knew we had a table full of experts — toxicologists, doctors, you name it.

Mrs LLOYD — People from the water.

Mr LLOYD — DEPI — just to tell us what was going on. They were good about it at the start. We agreed that they could come and test some of our sheep just to clear our mind — 'We'll be right'. They came and tested the water and the sheep and us, and all the tests came back positive for PFOS in our sheep, in us, in our kids, in everything. We had quite a few more meetings in between. DEPI got involved and they issued us with a

stock contamination notice, which was gut wrenching. That was the end of us, our life, as far as we knew, because of these tests that came back positive of PFOS and whatever else is in our sheep.

Mrs LLOYD — Then they decided that they needed to do more testing, detailed testing, on all our stock, on our whole property and more testing on us. They came through and they tested from one side of our property to the other side of our property. They tested us. We had to hold our kids down while blood tests were taken out of the kids.

Mr LLOYD — From our boundary and our dams it is 110 metres into our property off the fence line from Fiskville. That is where the road drops down. Our dams are full of it and our soils are full and the grass that grows through the soil has this stuff in it as well. We have not got much hope with that.

Mrs LLOYD — Sorry, it is hard to tell it all. They were kind of saying to us, ‘Don’t get lawyers. We’ll fix this for you. What can we do to fix this? We’ll buy your sheep off you’. They sat around the table offering to buy our sheep. They had the chequebook out wanting to pay — —

Mr LLOYD — They said they would write a cheque out here and now.

Mrs LLOYD — They were going to write a cheque out — ‘We’ll buy all your sheep off you. We’ll fence off your dam, we’ll fence off the property. We’ll run town water for you so you’ve got clean water’. We were just lost. We were just in complete and utter shock. We had no idea.

Mr LLOYD — We said no to that.

Mrs LLOYD — We said no. We needed lawyers.

Mr LLOYD — We needed some legal advice before we could take — it was \$350 000-odd worth of sheep they were offering to buy.

The CHAIR — Have you got any documentation — —

Mr LLOYD — Yes, we have.

The CHAIR — On any of those offers from the CFA?

Mrs LLOYD — Yes.

The CHAIR — You do not have to give them to us now. I was just asking.

Mr LLOYD — Yes, we have actually.

The CHAIR — Okay, so they have actually written an offer.

Mr LLOYD — Yes. They emailed it to us the next day.

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, they emailed an offer to us of what we had discussed. Then we had blood test results. They kept saying they were going to keep us informed, give us all the results. We were working with them; they were working with us. We had all the second lot of testing. We had 30 ewes blood-tested, 10 lambs killed, 30 ewes milked as well.

Mr LLOYD — Plus what? Six ewes?

Mrs LLOYD — Plus six ewes milked, because in all the studies they are finding how it is getting into the lambs when the lambs come off the ewes when they go to slaughter. They are finding it is in utero — in the birth — and then the lambs are drinking the milk and then it is in the lambs. All the studies that you read show that it stays; it is a man-made product and it does not break down.

Mr LLOYD — It does not break down.

The CHAIR — It is passed on from mother to child.

Mrs LLOYD — Passed on, passed on, passed on. Then we go to our blood tests, which are more disturbing because Matt's tests come back — our lawyer has done some research into it and in Australia there is one study that says that the highest level is 15.1 in a general study. Now Matt has come back at 140, mine has come back at 110, our daughter's is 100 and our other daughter's is 18. We were not sure why one child had more in her than the other. We were doing research trying to find out why. All we can figure out is that the one with 18 in her I did not really breastfeed at all. I breastfed her a little bit, but not very much. The one with 100 in her I breastfed until she was nearly two years old. We are not scientists; we do not know real things, but how else can it get into our child? How do we know what is going to happen to her? They do not know. They just said, 'Do you know what, we did this to you. Sorry about that'. That is it. As soon as we got lawyers, which we had to, they will not give us any of our test results of the second lot of blood tests that we have had done.

Mr LLOYD — We are going to VCAT on Wednesday to try to get our second lot of blood tests and sheep tests. It has been a fighting battle every time we try to get anything off them.

Mrs LLOYD — We are entitled to our results.

Mr LLOYD — There is nothing. When we sell our meat it goes all over the world. Probably they would not allow PFOS if they knew it was PFOS.

Mrs LLOYD — We don't know what to do.

Mr LLOYD — That is where we are at, I think. That sums up our predicament.

The CHAIR — You have asked for the full test results from the CFA and — —

Mrs LLOYD — Nothing. They refuse to give us our results. They refuse to give us our blood test results for ourselves, and we have to go to VCAT on Thursday to try to get the results for our livestock, the final results.

Mr McCURDY — Where are the livestock now?

Mr LLOYD — Just on our farm still. They are all full of this chemical, so it makes no difference.

Mr McCURDY — And they are the ones that you were offered \$350 000 for?

Mr LLOYD — Yes. That was replacement. We got Landmark to write a thing on what first-crossed ewes are worth at the present time and that is what it came up to. Michael Wootton said, 'We can fix this problem now at the kitchen table'. I said, 'No. I need some advice before I take that sort of money off someone'. As soon as we said we would get a lawyer involved, we saw the hairs on his neck stand up and that was about it.

Mr RAMSAY — Is that the signatory to the email?

Mr LLOYD — Yes. It is the same and then they reconfirmed it.

Mr RAMSAY — It is Michael Wootton who was the signatory?

Mr LLOYD — Or Sherry Herman.

Mrs LLOYD — Sherry Herman wrote the email.

Mr LLOYD — She wrote that Michael — —

Mrs LLOYD — Michael and Sherry were both — —

Mr RAMSAY — Can you table that document for us?

The CHAIR — It is in the submission.

Mr RAMSAY — Is it?

The CHAIR — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — Which I am not referring to.

The CHAIR — Yes, that is right.

Mr LLOYD — We did not bring it with us.

Mrs LLOYD — I can get it. It is in everything. It is in us, it is in our soil, our grass, our water, our sheep. It is in us. The main thing is that it is in our kids. This is not okay. It has got to be fixed. For them to just brush it off or for everyone to try to pretend it has not happened or whatever they are doing, I do not really understand. You are entitled to live a clean life and do the right thing, raising your kids in the country and trying to give them a good life.

The CHAIR — What do you think will happen? You still have the sheep that you have. What do you think will happen to them?

Mrs LLOYD — To try to cover ourselves — we have covered ourselves by having DEPI make the decision to say that they believe that the sheep are okay to sell and for people to eat. We did not mention that a few days after they issued us with the stock extermination notice they gave us a revocation of it, because they had decided that they did not think it was a concern to public health.

Mr LLOYD — Who actually knows what it can do to you?

Mrs LLOYD — And our thing was, ‘How do you know that?’. How do you know what this chemical does to people? Just to cover ourselves, because we need to keep making a living. They gave us a notice to say we could still sell them for human consumption, so we have just kept doing that, but we do not know whether that is the right thing to do or not. What do you do?

Mr LLOYD — It is a terrible feeling selling it knowing it has got this in there when we do not even know what it is or does or can do, but we have got to live. We have got bills to pay. It is just terrible.

Mr RAMSAY — Chair, may I ask some questions?

The CHAIR — Yes. Sorry, I will not butt in this time.

Mr RAMSAY — No, you are right. If you do not mind, Chair, I would just like to ask a couple of questions. I need clarification on a couple of things. Being a farmer myself, I understand some of the issues you are going through. I am not clear about who is actually doing the testing on the stock because you are talking about having to go to VCAT. I understand the Department of Primary Industries has done the tests.

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — Yet they have not given you a receipt of those tests. So you do not know what chemicals — —

Mr LLOYD — We got initial tests.

Mrs LLOYD — From the first four sheep that they tested that came back positive with levels in it. They have given us that.

Mr LLOYD — There is some of that here on this sheet.

Mr RAMSAY — How do we do this — through the Chair?

The CHAIR — Yes. Can we keep this? Is this a copy that we can have, or can we make a copy?

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, we have a copy. That is fine.

Mr LLOYD — That is all right. We are still waiting for the results for the next 30 sheep. Our lawyers have sent numerous letters to try to get the results of blood tests, and that is why we are going to VCAT — to get the rest of them.

Mr RAMSAY — They have taken away the contamination notice on your stock?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — When you sell stock you are required to fill in a national vendor declaration form.

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — Which then you have to sign if the stock have had access to any chemicals or any known — —

Mr LLOYD — Yes, and we went through that channel.

Mr RAMSAY — How is the DPI advising you on that?

Mr LLOYD — ‘Go ahead’.

Mr RAMSAY — So as far as they are concerned there is nothing wrong with your stock, it is able to be sold and customers are able to eat the product? So financially you are not impeded, because you can sell your stock and it goes to food processing and then eventually to the market?

Mr LLOYD — Yes, that is true.

Mr RAMSAY — In relation to your own health blood tests, you talk about 100 and 150. I am still not clear on what that is telling us or telling you. Is that a test on PFOS particularly or a range of chemicals?

Mr LLOYD — A range of chemicals.

Mr RAMSAY — Is that directly related to Fiskville or some other things?

Mr LLOYD — I would not know why it would be anything else.

Mrs LLOYD — This is the testing done from Fiskville.

Mr LLOYD — Fiskville’s own doctor has done this to us.

Mrs LLOYD — This is the testing that the doctor did for us.

Mr LLOYD — Dr Michael Sargeant.

Mr RAMSAY — For you personally, to identify if you yourselves have been contaminated through the run-off, is that right, in relation to blood levels?

Mr LLOYD — Through the meat we have eaten and now probably the fish we have eaten and living there.

Mrs LLOYD — And living there, and the air, because it is airborne.

Mr RAMSAY — Have you sought independent testing?

Mr LLOYD — We cannot afford it.

Mrs LLOYD — We cannot afford to have all that done.

Mr LLOYD — Where would we start? It is huge.

Mrs LLOYD — We were working with them at the start. Everything was fine. We were working with them. We thought we were doing the right thing. We were gathering as much information for ourselves from them as they were giving it to us, and as soon as we got lawyers they stopped giving us anything, and now we have to go to VCAT and get information, to try to get the detailed copies of our results. This is a copy of the water testing, and you can see the levels of PFOS in our dam.

The CHAIR — What is the level in your dam?

Mrs LLOYD — PFOS — it has an asterisk against it.

The CHAIR — It is 7.38.

Mr RICHARDSON — I just have a couple of questions. Thank you, Matthew and Beccara, for coming in. One relates to the Department of Primary Industries. Did they give any reasoning for issuing the notice that came forward that said the stock was unsafe and then revoking that?

Mr LLOYD — No. It virtually just came back three or four days later and said, ‘You are right to go again’.

Mrs LLOYD — ‘We’ve decided’.

Mr LLOYD — No real reason.

Mr RICHARDSON — So first that contamination notice and then no explanation subsequent to that?

Mr LLOYD — Virtually, yes.

Mr RICHARDSON — The second thing I want to put forward to you is the fact that Fiskville is now closed by the CFA based on the levels of PFOS, but you are still residing and your stock is a stone’s throw away. How do you reconcile that kind of thing as well, given that it is not safe now for people to train there, according to the CFA, but you are a stone’s throw away on your premises?

Mr LLOYD — Exactly. There is a fence between us, that is the difference. But what do we do? Where do we go? It is terrible. It is a terrible position that I am put in every day because I have to work our farm knowing this stuff is there, our sheep have got a chemical they should not have in them. But what do we do? Where do we go? Everyone has to live.

Mr RICHARDSON — How has that impacted both of you in terms of the town and the region?

Mr LLOYD — Mentally it is ruining me, mate. I cannot handle it. It has cooked me.

Mr RICHARDSON — I appreciate you coming in today.

The CHAIR — Following on from what Mr Ramsay was saying about whether this is due to Fiskville. You said there was a meeting at your place where there were the offers. Who was at that meeting? I was a bit confused about whether it was to do with the contamination of the stock notice.

Mrs LLOYD — We had about four or five meetings with them all.

Mr LLOYD — Sherry Herman.

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, Sherry Herman, Lex de Man, Martyn Bona. Then we had Mick Wootten, Roger Drew, Tony Britt, Michael Sargeant and also that other man — —

The CHAIR — Were they all from the CFA?

Mr LLOYD — They are all specialised in certain areas, whether in biosecurity — —

Mrs LLOYD — Russell Murray from the DPI.

The CHAIR — They were all at the one meeting?

Mr LLOYD — We have probably had six at one meeting at a time.

The CHAIR — So DPI and the CFA at the one meeting?

Mrs LLOYD — Yes. And then they had a man that came in and discussed with us and coached us about how to talk to the media and what to say.

The CHAIR — From another organisation?

Mrs LLOYD — Sherry Herman organised a man from the media to come and just discuss with us how to handle media.

Mr LLOYD — On CFA's behalf, virtually.

Mrs LLOYD — Make a statement.

The CHAIR — And what was the advice given?

Mr LLOYD — He sought of wanted to persuade us, I guess, to say that the CFA is a great place, they are doing everything they can to fix it. There was no mention of how we actually felt. It was just that they wanted us to say everything was fine, and we said, 'We are not liking this. It is not fine, we are not going to hide it. It is not the truth'. Things are not right over there, and we happen to be on the wrong end of the creek.

Mr RAMSAY — Has the CFA offered to purchase your property?

Mr LLOYD — No. We asked, and that would have been an easy fix for us. We would have been happy. But nothing. They just do not speak to us. It is terrible.

Mr RAMSAY — Can I just be clear? You are still able to carry on your farming business, though?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — Unimpeded by any restrictions from a DPI point of view?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — And yet the issue is still that you are not clear about the levels of PFOS within your stock, within your water and within yourselves?

Mr LLOYD — That is right.

Mr RAMSAY — So you have got that overhanging — —

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, or what it is going to do to us.

Mr LLOYD — We stopped our farm gate business just for our own morals, that we could not sell this meat happily knowing that it has got something in it. We do not know what it has got in it or what it can do to someone, but for us to sleep a little bit easier, I guess you would say, we just had to stop that side of things, because that is something we can control, and I went and got another job. That was virtually — —

Mr RAMSAY — Would it be an out for you if the CFA came up tomorrow and offered you a fair market value for the property? You are now using legal counsel.

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — For you, is the best result to perhaps be offered a price where you could go away and start somewhere else?

Mr LLOYD — To get the equivalent of what we have got, I would. That is where I am at — equivalent house, quality sheds; you know, start again. Because at the moment we cannot do what we are doing comfortably and morally right where we are.

Mrs LLOYD — We should not have to live with this happening to us — —

Mr McCURDY — Through no fault of your own.

Mrs LLOYD — and going through all this. We should not have to.

Mr LLOYD — We do not sleep at night. I am a mess; I shake, I have tears. It is ruining me.

Mr RAMSAY — I have to say, on the face of it the CFA behaviour has been appalling in this instance.

Mr LLOYD — Shocking, mate, absolutely.

Mr RAMSAY — I cannot believe you have been treated like that. Hopefully this will go some way to righting the wrong.

Mr LLOYD — Terrible, absolutely. I am part of the CFA, I am a volunteer; I am a lieutenant. The image of them is to be great in your communities and great people for everyone. They are not great to everyone.

Mrs LLOYD — Not when it comes to this. We are just really concerned about our children. What is going to happen to them in 30, 20 — who knows what is going to happen? It is not okay just for them to have all this stuff in them. Then what happens if they grow up and cannot have children or have something wrong with them? It is unacceptable.

Mr RICHARDSON — I think another important point is that there is, from our understanding, not Australian standards around PFOS at the moment, and that adds to your dilemma and uncertainty.

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, that is exactly right. It is not okay just for someone to go, ‘We think that it should be okay, so you’ll be right’.

Mr RICHARDSON — Especially when it is closed off next door.

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mrs LLOYD — That is right. That was our whole thing. If they have come and issued a clean-up notice on CFA, our dam is exactly the same. Who turned a blind eye to that? Who did not say, ‘What about next door’? We can clearly see — —

Mr RICHARDSON — The water flows in from — —

Mr LLOYD — Yes, a river, virtually.

The CHAIR — Could you maybe just explain that a little bit more? So there is the Fiskville dam, which is no longer used?

Mr LLOYD — Yes, and they have diverted the Fiskville dam with a new man-made creek, but prior to that the Fiskville dam just overflowed straight down the creek into our big dams. We have got two big dams on our farm that water the rest of the farm. So every single chemical in the Fiskville dam is the same as ours. It has to be; there is no denying it on a floodplain where the creek overflows all out onto our land. It is all in the testing; it is contaminated.

Mrs LLOYD — They have come to us. They have given us this information. They are telling us, ‘Yes, it’s in there; yes, it’s in your water; yes, it’s in your kids; it’s in your meats; yes, it’s everywhere’, and then when we say, ‘Well, we want proper information, and let’s fix it up. We have to get lawyers’, they are like, ‘Well, we don’t have to do anything’. That is what they are like. That is it. None of them are allowed to speak to us ever again, yet each of them in their own way kind of told us we should — remember they would say, ‘Oh, you should get legal advice’? Off the record they would say it.

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — To just be clear, there is no dispute about the effluent from the training pad that is run into a watercourse that is flowing into your property? So the CFA have never disputed the link between Fiskville and your water contamination of the dam?

Mrs LLOYD — No.

Mr RAMSAY — And by the fact that they have offered you money for the sheep indicates there is some guilt?

Mrs LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — Have they offered you any remedial action in relation to your waterways?

Mr LLOYD — The only thing they said to us was they would hook onto the town water from Fiskville, the Ballan mains, and run it into our place to get our stock clean water, once we got clean stock. But other than that, nothing.

Mr RAMSAY — But emptying the dam and actually removing the sludge and all that remediation work?

Mr LLOYD — Nothing; not a thing. They spent all this money on the other side of our ringlock fence and not a thing on our side.

The CHAIR — I think they have been talking about containment or remedial work within Fiskville. Does that then stop any further — —

Mr LLOYD — They have left that in a bad way. All the contaminated soil — signed ‘Contaminated’ — piles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 are on our fence line, and the water just runs straight off the stockpiles back into our paddocks and farm. There is a little bale of straw in the corner of one of them. Obviously it is a bunting, I suppose you would call it. There are four or five piles of this dirt and it just runs straight back into our farm.

The CHAIR — Is it covered or secured so that dust does not blow everywhere?

Mr LLOYD — No, nothing. It has just got ‘Contaminated’ signs on it so we know they are contaminated topsoil. It just runs straight back onto our farm.

Mr McCURDY — Does it ever flow from your farm?

Mr LLOYD — No, it runs off them into us.

Mrs LLOYD — Our water runs back into the Beremboke Creek, doesn't it?

Mr LLOYD — Yes. Once it leaves our farm it heads right down into Geelong.

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, out of Lake Fiskville into our dams, and then when our dams overflow they flow back into the creek, which runs all the way back down.

Mr LLOYD — But the earthworks from the contaminated soils being left are terrible, the way the water can just run straight off it and straight back into our farm.

Mrs LLOYD — It is even now, today.

Mr LLOYD — Even today. The last bit of rain we got was running back into the new man-made creek and back into our paddocks. It goes straight back into our dams, and that is the contaminated soil.

Mr RICHARDSON — Just a follow-up question to the meeting at your house with the CFA and to now not being able to get test results that are your individual results that have been taken from your family. What are some of the things you put that down to? What has been the deterioration in the response from where you had senior people around your kitchen table to now not even being able to access your own medical — —

Mrs LLOYD — Because we got lawyers, because we got legal advice.

Mr LLOYD — Mick Bourke — in the early days, Beccara and I would have phone meetings with him. We would sit the phone in the middle of the table. He was not ever very nice to us, anyway, about the whole thing but he did speak to us. We asked him the same questions time and time again: ‘How are we going to fix this?’, ‘How are we going to fix it?’. And he would come back, ‘I'll get back to you’, ‘I'll get back to you’ — nothing ever happened. So this particular day we rang Slater & Gordon, because we were getting nowhere; we were just going around and around in circles. Mick Bourke was supposed to have a phone meeting with us that afternoon. He somehow had heard that we had lawyers now and he sent me a text message and said, ‘We can no longer speak to each other, now that Slater & Gordon are involved’. That was the last we ever heard of him. He was never nice. He never wanted to give us an idea of how to fix anything. He was just, ‘We've done nothing wrong’ virtually, the whole time.

Mr RAMSAY — Has Slater & Gordon been in touch officially to the CFA?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — Because you have to think, if there is now correspondence between Slater & Gordon and the CFA, they have probably been advised not to continue in any current negotiation, given there is now a legal engagement.

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, everything stopped. It is the right thing to do to come and do this and let everyone know how it affects everyone, not just people that worked there, and that it affects other people in the community.

Mr RAMSAY — The Fiskville site is about 300 acres?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — And my understanding is the furthest dam was found to have some contamination in it. I am just trying to get a picture of the proximity of your property. Is that in that very south corner?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mrs LLOYD — That is our big dam.

Mr RAMSAY — Presumably you are running more south of the waterway?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr RAMSAY — Is that on the very far side where it is only vegetation, not the facility itself?

Mr LLOYD — It is on the south side of Fiskville itself — the PAD and everything. The water runs through there and then into us. Is that what you mean?

Mr RAMSAY — I know the south side, but the road runs on the east side.

Mr LLOYD — Yes. It is a ringlock fence between their big dam and us, virtually.

Mr RAMSAY — There is quite a bit of land from the PAD itself to that far point of the property.

Mr LLOYD — Yes, that is right.

Mr RAMSAY — The contamination is travelling a fair way is the point I am trying to make — from the PAD through Fiskville to your property.

Mr LLOYD — They have got settlement dams off the PAD obviously, and it all used to run into the Fiskville lake. Then once it overflowed it went straight into our place. They have changed it now.

Mr RAMSAY — It does not overflow anymore, does it?

Mr LLOYD — No, but we still have all the contaminated piles of dirt running into our place.

Mr RICHARDSON — Have you had any contact from PrimeSafe or other government agencies, or even the department of health?

Mr LLOYD — No, we have not. We are aware that PrimeSafe know about us. DEPI had to let them know at some stage.

The CHAIR — Are you only on tank water for drinking, washing and everything?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

The CHAIR — Did you get the smoke that comes over when they were doing the fire training?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

The CHAIR — Has any of the water been tested by the EPA or anybody else?

Mr LLOYD — Yes, we had it all tested.

Mrs LLOYD — Cardno Lane Piper tested our water, and they said it was okay.

Mr LLOYD — It came back okay, yes.

Mrs LLOYD — As it travelled across the property, as it got towards the other end of our property, it seemed to fade off a little bit. But straight across the fence line it was exactly the same as it is in Fiskville, and our dam is the same.

Mr YOUNG — After the contamination notice, was there any testing done on the livestock after that?

Mr LLOYD — Yes.

Mr YOUNG — Is that when the testing was done?

Mr LLOYD — With the first contamination notice they only tested 4 sheep and 10 ewes, and they all came back positive. Then they came back the second time and tested 30 ewes and took 10 lambs and killed them.

Mr YOUNG — Was that after the contamination notice was revoked?

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, and they are the results we are wanting, but they will not give them to us.

Mr YOUNG — When the contamination notice was revoked, did you contact DPI as to inquire as to why?

Mr LLOYD — Yes, and they just said, ‘We made a decision’. There was no reasoning.

Mr YOUNG — That was the response, ‘We have made a decision’?

Mrs LLOYD — Yes, and we said, ‘Could you write us a letter to say we can still sell them?’.

Mr LLOYD — To put our own minds at rest that it is sort of legal.

Mrs LLOYD — They just sent us a letter to say it will be okay to sell them. That is all we have ever got.

Mr LLOYD — But there has never been a reasoning or anything.

Mrs LLOYD — You know that when you are filling out the forms you would say that the sheep cannot get sold with a bit of drench in it.

Mr LLOYD — You are not supposed to. There is a withholding period after a drench of 14 days. You know that; that is just a rule. What is the holding period for this stuff in our sheep?

Mrs LLOYD — It never breaks down. It does not do anything.

Mr LLOYD — There is no withholding period. It is a chemical that is in them that should not be in them. If they are worried about a drench, imagine what they would worry about if this was a problem.

The CHAIR — What do you think will happen now after this gets out?

Mr LLOYD — I do not know. Something has to be fixed. It is not right.

Mrs LLOYD — The hardest thing to do was to come and do this, because we have not told anyone about this ever.

Mr LLOYD — To try to protect our family and ourselves.

Mrs LLOYD — We are just trying to do the right thing.

Mr LLOYD — Someone has to say something. It has to be said, because we cannot keep living like this. We cannot keep doing it.

The CHAIR — In terms of this inquiry, what recommendations would you like to see generally and also in terms of your own situation?

Mr LLOYD — Generally, the joint has to be cleaned up.

Mrs LLOYD — We believe we are entitled to a clean farm, clean sheep, a normal life. We should not have to have this. It needs to be sorted out. It cannot keep getting swept under the carpet like it has been for all this time.

Mr LLOYD — You cannot spray a farm and kill next door's crop. That is a huge no-no. What makes it right for them to have all these chemicals come into our place and just walk away and leave them there? That should not happen. It does not happen. It should not happen.

Mr RAMSAY — I said to you before is a good outcome for you for the CFA to purchase your property. My understanding is they have offered other adjoining landholders a purchase where there has been contamination, and there has been argy-bargy over a number of years on that. For you, do you think a full remediation and decontamination of your dams and water supplies, given you have already been given a clean bill of health on your stock in as much as you can continue trading, is a good outcome for you?

Mr LLOYD — I think the stigma of where we live has ruined even the value of our land now. Even if we cleaned it and everything like that, people are going to say, 'You live right next to a toxic wasteland, virtually'. It is never going to be the value of what it should be, despite the work we have put into it and what we have made it. I do not know that whatever they could do now is going to change the stigma that is around our farm and our area for what we do. It is just going to be there. People know. The town talks.

Mrs LLOYD — We should not have to live like this.

Mr LLOYD — We do not have to live like this. It is wrong. Does that answer your question?

Mr RAMSAY — Yes, it does. I will leave it there.

The CHAIR — We have asked all our questions. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Mr LLOYD — Thanks for giving us a chance to say what we have to say.

The CHAIR — Thanks for showing the courage to come and speak here today.

Committee adjourned.