****Shaping an argument through selection of detail and omission of detail****

**As in all persuasive texts, Winton deliberately selects detail that suits his argument and portrays oil and gas industry as anti-environment. He choses to focus on the possibility of disaster such as oil spills citing how this has happened in other countries as a reason why it could happen in Australian waters. He follows this with a discussion on emissions coming from oil and gas industry and then uses a case study of Subsea 7 as an example of how industry could possibly destroy the marine environment through clearing of land and ocean. This selection of detail positions us to see oil and gas development as dangerous to the environment in three possibly ways.**

**Winton omits two factors in his argument – one, that any oil/gas project must be passed by independent environmental protection agency – NOPSEMA. Projects must submit plans for preservation of the environment and no project can be approved without environmental approval. In fact, not long after Winton released this opinion essay, the Subsea 7 proposed project at Ningaloo was rejected and then withdrawn by Subsea 7 when they realized environmental approval wouldn’t be given.**

**A second interesting point omitted by Winton is that the family outdoor activities he cites as important to Australian families all rely on oil/gas production for their equipment. Camping, fishing, cars, boats, accommodation and hospitality all require man-made equipment and as McConville points out without oil/gas, there would be “no glass, no clothing…no steel, no concrete…no plastic”. So some level of oil/gas production is needed for the activities Winton enjoys. (Omits the fact that these activities require oil and gas)**

**McConville does likewise in omitting some details from his argument in order to position us to think that oil/gas can possibly be a bridge to more long-term environmentally friendly energy production. For example, gas production may be a low CO2 emitter compared to burning coal, but it also leaks methane during production, which is worse for the environment than CO2. And globally the demand for gas is rapidly increasing so to meet this demand gas production needs to rapidly increase as well. This means that we are not actually reducing CO2 emissions because gas production is expanding on a large scale, even it our reliance on coal is decreasing. So while reducing reliance on coal is necessary, it cannot just be replaced and overtaken by huge productions of gas as this won’t reduce CO2. Scientists say that gas production should remain at current levels, not expand, and that increasing demands for energy should be met by renewable sources, not increased production of gas.**

**How has Winton deliberately constructed this opinion essay to convince the audience to “defend Ningaloo”?**

**‘how’ means any techniques**

**‘deliberately constructed’ means using persuasive structures, selecting specific detail/omitting some detail, targeting values/emotions/beliefs**

**Introduction:**

* **Begin in an interesting way (optional).**
* **Introduce the text: title, author, date of publication.**
* **Put the text in context.**
* **Outline your answer to the question.**

**Body paragraphs:**

* **Topic sentence that answers the question.**
* **Evidence/examples from the text.**
* **Explain what the evidence proves.**

**Conclusion:**

* **Restate the answer to the question (different words).**
* **Add value. Answer “so what?”**
* **Why is the text important?**
* **What’s your response?**
* **What function/purpose does the text have in society?**