

From:
To: [Legal and Constitutional, Committee \(SEN\);](#)
Subject: waste dump submission
Date: Friday, 12 March 2010 1:31:15 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

It has come to my attention that the Government has proposed replacement legislation that will repeal the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act.

The NRWMB leaves Muckaty, north of Tennant Creek in the NT, as the only site that will be initially considered under the NRWMB despite widespread opposition and a flawed, secretive nomination process for the Muckaty site.

I am strongly opposed to this government action for various reasons, including, the clear factor that the Muckaty site is highly contested.

The nomination of the Muckaty site by the Northern Land Council was highly controversial and is strongly contested by many Traditional Owners. Resources Minister Martin Ferguson claims that Ngapa Traditional Owners support the nomination of the Muckaty site but he knows that many Ngapa Traditional Owners oppose the dump — as well as numerous requests for meetings, he received a letter opposing the dump in May 2009 signed by 25 Ngapa Traditional Owners and 32 Traditional Owners from other Muckaty groups.

Mr Ferguson is also aware of the unanimous resolution passed by the NT Labor Conference in April 2008 which called on the Federal Government to exclude Muckaty on the grounds that the nomination "was not made with the full and informed consent of all Traditional Owners and affected people and as such does not comply with the Aboriginal Land Rights Act". Mr Ferguson also knows that fellow Ministers Jenny Macklin, Kim Carr, Peter Garrett and Warren Snowdon among others have acknowledged the distress and opposition of many Muckaty Traditional Owners.

As well as this nuclear waste clearly should be moved as little as possible, and should be stored above ground close to the point of production, close

to centers of nuclear expertise and infrastructure. The Lucas Heights nuclear agency ANSTO is by far the biggest single source of the waste, and all the relevant organizations have acknowledged that ongoing waste storage at Lucas Heights is a viable option — the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organization, the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, the Australian Nuclear Association and even Mr Ferguson's own department. Additionally, requiring ANSTO to store its own waste is the best — and perhaps the only — way of focusing the Organization's collective mind on the importance of waste minimization principles.

Any site selection process ought to be based on scientific and environmental siting criteria, as well as on the principle of voluntarism. In 2005, the Howard government chose the NT, and ruled out NSW, for purely political reasons. When the federal Bureau of Resource Sciences conducted a national repository site selection study in the 1990s, informed by scientific, environmental and social criteria, the Muckatya area did not even make the short-list as a "suitable" site.

This short submission covers some of the important aspects related to this issue; it is vital the Government considers carefully the opinions of members of the public and especially those traditional owners directly affected by the decisions made by the government.