

Dear Senator Ferguson,

I would like to register my opposition to your proposal for a nuclear waste dump at Muckaty, Northern Territory.

It is essential that the Senate Committee pay due respects to the Traditional Owners by travelling to Tennant Creek to take evidence from them directly. The nomination of the Muckaty site by the Northern Land Council is highly controversial and is strongly contested by many Traditional Owners. "All along we have said we don't want this dump on our land but we have been ignored. Martin Ferguson has avoided us and ignored our letters but he knows very well how we feel. He has been arrogant and secretive and he thinks he has gotten away with his plan but in fact he has a big fight on his hands." -- Muckaty Traditional Owner Dianne Stokes

The unanimous resolution, passed by the NT Labor Conference in April 2008, 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".

Nuclear waste should be moved as little as possible, and should be stored above ground close to the point of production, close to centres 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 organisations have acknowledged that ongoing waste storage at Lucas Heights is a viable option — the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, 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 focussing the Organisation's collective mind on the importance of waste minimisation principles.

Regards,

Anna Barnes