



Ngoppon Together Inc.

(Walking Together Reconciliation Group)

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Murray Bridge
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*We acknowledge the Land, Waters and Environment of the Ngarrindjeri People,
the traditional custodians of this area*

Ngoppon Together takes the opportunity to make a brief submission to the Senate Inquiry (given time constraints) re the proposed National Radioactive Waste Management Bill.

Ngoppon Together is concerned about Aboriginal rights and over the years written a number of times to the Federal and State Governments of both political persuasions about the infringements of these rights. Through the Aboriginal Traditional Custodians of our area we are also aware of the long term damage made to land and waters since settlement – in our own area but throughout the nation.

We are concerned that the present Bill proposes legislation that will continue both these violations. **In particular we are concerned that Muckaty Station, north of Tennant Creek NT is the only site which will be initially considered for the proposed national radioactive dump if the Bill is passed in its present form.**

We acknowledge that Muckaty Station was nominated by the Northern Land Council in a secretive nomination process. We acknowledge the strong protestations of the Traditional Owners, at the time and continuing - *'All along we have said that we don't want this dump on our land but we have been ignored.'* Diane Stokes.

We also understand that the NT Labor Conference in 2008 called on the Federal Government to exclude Muckaty Station 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 conform with the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.'* We acknowledge also that Minister Macklin and other Cabinet Ministers have also acknowledged the distress and opposition of many Muckaty Traditional Owners.

We are aware of the long campaign against the national dump which was waged in our own state of South Australia, led by the *Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta*, Senior Aboriginal women of the Coober Pedy region. We are aware that in the 1990s there were a number of scientifically proven sites which included some in the state of NSW as well as the SA sites. However, then as now, none of the NSW sites were chosen while Muckaty Station was not even mentioned at this time.

We realise that because of its very nature nuclear waste

- should be moved as little as possible.
- should be stored above ground
- close to centres of nuclear expertise and infrastructure.

Relevant organisation including Resources Minister Ferguson's own department have acknowledged that ongoing waste storage at the Lucas Heights nuclear agency ANSTO is a viable option.

While we understand that the Minister has assured the nation through a recent media announcement that the site if not proven scientifically appropriate will be abandoned, we are concerned that the proposed Bill places a great deal of power in the hands of the Minister to assess whether the Muckaty site will go ahead. There is no information given as to how this assessment will be carried out. The Bill moreover makes clear that the local people will have no right of appeal

We urge the Senate Inquiry to ensure the Government makes a safe scientific and environmental decision in this vital area of radioactive waste storage rather than one based on political expediency.

We urge the proposed Bill be amended so as not to override state/territory laws & Aboriginal interests (s 11& 12)

We strongly urge that the Senate Committee acknowledge the need to hear directly from the Ngapa Traditional Owners by travelling to Tennant Creek to take direct evidence from them
Thank you for receiving our submission.

For Ngoppon Together Inc.

9th March 2010



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