



Committee Secretary  
Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
e: [pwc@aph.gov.au](mailto:pwc@aph.gov.au)

30 July 2021

Dear Standing Committee

**RE: Submission – ANSTO Intermediate Level Solid Waste Storage Facility Lucas Heights, NSW Inquiry**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission to the Committee's consideration of an extension to the intermediate level solid waste (ILSW) storage facility at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) Lucas Heights site.

The Conservation Council SA is an independent, non-profit and strictly non-party political organisation representing around 60 of South Australia's environment and conservation organisations and their 90,000 members.

The Conservation Council SA recognises that a durable solution to the storage of Australia's expanding ILSW is necessary to allow programs such as Australia's nuclear medicine production to continue. Australia has a clear responsibility to safely and securely manage radioactive waste.

As indicated in their submission to the inquiry, ANSTO possesses expertise and experience in storing ILSW, as *"ANSTO currently stores over 496 cubic metres of ILW from legacy activities, and generates an additional five cubic metres per annum... [which] will increase to approximately fourteen cubic metres per annum upon the commencement of operations of the new 'Synroc' waste treatment facility."*

Federal Government attempts at securing community consent for a larger, more permanent ILSW site in South Australia near either Hawker and Kimba have led to widespread community concern across South Australia, and clear public opposition from Barngarla Traditional Owners. It has created deeply divided and polarised communities in Kimba where consideration of an ILSW site has progressed much further than at Hawker.

The Federal Government has promised not to impose a facility on an unwilling community.

Whilst a Government may be entitled to change their mind, imposing a ILSW facility upon a divided community is a recipe for ongoing problems and community grievance. The well-documented long-term environmental risks of the Kimba or Hawker proposals, including the double-handling required for transport of the ILSW to such sites, are also of particular concern to the Conservation Council SA and its membership.

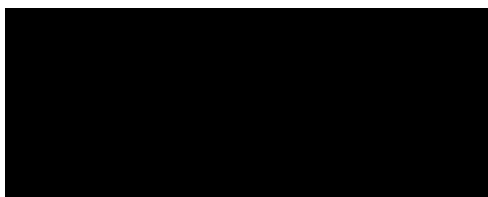
It is for these reasons that the Conservation Council SA strongly supports ANSTO's preferred option of a new and modern facility within the waste precinct of ANSTO's 70-hectare Lucas Heights site. ANSTO has highlighted the low technical risk, low comparative cost, achievable schedule, and low organisational impact of adopting this option.

Aside from extending Australia's ILSW storage solution "*by at least 10 years to 2037*"<sup>1</sup>, adopting this option will create a critically useful circuit breaker to the current tensions created during the Federal Government's recent pursuit of the 'Kimba solution' – a 'solution' that would need to be imposed by the Government upon a divided and insufficiently supportive rural South Australian community, as well as the broader, and widely unsupportive South Australian community.

In conclusion, the Conservation Council SA recommends that the Committee support the ANSTO proposal for a new and modern facility within the waste precinct of ANSTO's 70-hectare Lucas Heights site whilst the Federal Government undertakes a comprehensive examination of more appropriate long-term management options that generate genuine broad community consent.

If you require further information, please contact me at 

Yours sincerely,



Craig Wilkins  
Chief Executive

---

<sup>1</sup> p3, ANSTO, *Intermediate Level Solid Waste Storage Facility – Statement of Evidence for the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works*, June 2021