

To the Legal and Constitutional Committee re the National Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2010

I am making a submission on the crucial issue of the Radioactive Waste Dump which as I am sure you are all aware poses grave health risks of increased cancer incidence and genetic mutation.

In 2006 I visited the Muckaty site and spoke with Traditional Owners there who were quite traumatised about the risk of the land they were living on being contaminated. They spoke of other Traditional Owners being bribed to sign off on their land with promises of money for schools and hospitals etc which should have been provided for them anyway.

Therefore there are grounds to exclude Muckaty as the Waste Dump site because not all the Traditional Owners gave their full and informed consent.

If there is to be a Nuclear Waste Dump site as a consequence of Australia mining uranium (something I am completely opposed to for the same health reasons) then it appears that the more appropriate place would be to have ongoing storage at Lucas Heights. This would be an incentive for the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation to focus on minimising the amount of waste produced and the threat of its leakage. This would also eliminate the risk of accident during transportation. I find it immoral to instead put innocent and vulnerable lives at risk in a 'faraway' place.

I am also very worried by this Bill because of what I see as its coercive nature. Section 11 overrides state or territory laws, Section 12 overrides the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984 and also the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, and Section 13 overrides individual property rights. The Bill also gives Minister Martin Ferguson the power to make the decision about which site to pursue and local people will have no right of appeal. To me this seems far from a fair and democratic process and could have grave legal and political ramifications.

I urge the Senate Committee to meet with the Traditional Owners as I did, to make the effects of this Bill real to you as it did to me.

Thankyou very much for reading my submission.

Liz Denborough