

12 March 2010

Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee
PO Box 6100 Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Senate Enquiry into radioactive waste management

Whilst the Government must be commended for repealing the existing legislation with regard to radioactive waste, the bill to replace it is simply not acceptable. It is undemocratic. For example:

- How can it possibly be considered democratic to override state or territory laws that hinder site selection?
- How can it be considered democratic to override or disregard laws that protect the rights of aborigines and the environment?
- Giving a Minister the right of selection with no appeal process is not a transparent process and will lead to accusations of influence or arrogance. There are more appropriate processes available.

It is imperative that the committee travels to the Northern Territory to visit the site and the people who will be affected by the decision in relation to the waste dump.

I believe the whole process must be revisited to ensure that the best possible outcome is achieved. Is a waste dump in a remote area that is difficult to monitor on a regular basis the best option; have other options been explored; would it not be better to locate the waste near to its production site to minimise the risk of accidents?

Good policy will only come from exploring all the options based on sound scientific evidence. That is the type of policy vital for any form of radioactive waste. I implore the committee to consider all the options, not the most pragmatic ones that may have long term adverse consequences particularly for aboriginal people, the most disadvantaged in Australia.

Yours faithfully,

LEONIE STUBBS