

Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee

Re Muckaty Station – Nuclear Waste Facility

Dear Senators

I write to express my concern regarding a nuclear waste facility proposed for Muckaty Station North of Tennant Creek in the Northern Territory and the process of writing submissions to gauge community interest in this matter.

I am a community member of the Barkly Region in the Northern Territory and have been since 1982 and am proud to call myself a Territorian from Tennant Creek. I and my family have lived and worked in some of the remotest isolated communities of the Barkly Region NT facilitating educational outcomes for children and adults. My children are Territorians. My best friends and extended adopted family members also live in Tennant Creek and the Barkly.

1. First, let me say this, I think that it is appalling that our community is asked to make written submissions to this inquiry, and that the senate committee will use written submissions to gauge community interest, when it is a known fact that a large number of our community members are known not to use English literacy as a form of communication to acquire and disseminate information and understandings.
2. The issue of building and storing nuclear waste at Muckaty Station is an issue that affects us all, not just small number of people, I say this, it is a known fact that no nuclear waste storage facility in the world can put their hand up and say they have never had a nuclear accident. The consequence of such a thing happening alone affects all community members, our children and grandchildren for years to come. We should have our say, be respected and included as people who have an interested in the future decisions that affect our region.
3. This proposal is affecting the harmony of our Barkly community. I am gravely concerned this issue is having devastating consequences that affects a large number of indigenous peoples of the Barkly. This nuclear waste issue will in the short and long term undermine indigenous culture, cultural obligations, kingships and law. I have witnessed traditional women who have recorded claims over the Muckaty land beating their chest in passionate anger, in tears at not being heard or considered or even respected. These old women, when the land was handed back danced for this country. This whole situation is shameful. I hang my head in shame just thinking of their pain. I say this Shame, Shame, and Shame on the Senate Committee if you let this situation continue.
4. I also say this regarding Territory people, we really are real....., we have families and friends who live in the Territory, we have our babies in the Territory, we contribute to our local and national economies, we are intelligent human beings who are proud to be Territorians. We are not second rate people who do not deserve to have a voice. We are not a bunch of hicks who should be stood over and ignored and in this case bullied into having a nuclear waste dump in our back yard.

You as a committee are in a lucky position; you have a choice and even luckier because some Australians agree we need a nuclear waste dump facility, half the battle over.

Please get it right the first time, we do not need little Muckaty's all over the country in the future. We need ONE purpose built facility that will host all our future nuclear waste needs in a dry place, on ecological sound land, away from communities who could be adversely effected by transport accidentence, earthquakes, terrorism acts and an almost wipe out of prime beef cattle export market if such a thing happened. Your decision should be based on one thing, and that is a Duty of Care for the people of Tennant Creek Barkly Region and the Northern Territory.

I thank you for your time to read and consider this submission

Dawn Mccarthy

A proud Tennant Creek Northern Territorian

15th March 2010