

From:
To: [Legal and Constitutional, Committee \(SEN\);](#)
Subject: Submission to enquiry about the proposed Nuclear Waste Dump
Date: Thursday, 11 March 2010 4:12:57 PM

To the Senate Committee

I am a resident of the Northern Territory and would like to make my views known about your proposed plans to impose a Nuclear Waste Dump on a remote part of the Northern Territory.

The nomination of Mukaty site by the Northern Land Council was highly controversial and is strongly contested by many Traditional Owners. Resources Minister Martin Ferguson claims that Ngapa Traditional Owners support the nomination of the Muckaty site but he knows that many Ngapa Traditional Owners oppose the dump — as well as numerous requests for meetings, he received a letter opposing the dump in May 2009 signed by 25 Ngapa Traditional Owners and 32 Traditional Owners from other Muckaty groups. To continue to promote that this is the only site that has been put forward lacks truth, is deceptive and coercive. I would like to understand how you, Mr Ferguson, gained this consent from some of the traditional owners - did you

1. Give them full information about what you would be doing with their land
2. Did you tell them how long it will be used for by you
3. Did you inform them of the dangers of transporting this waste to their land and how many dreaming lines would be crossed in the transportation of this substance
4. Did you gain informed consent, was this information given in their language, did you use interpreters and did you get signed consent from them that they understand all of the above conditions

Nuclear waste should be moved as little as possible, and should be stored above ground close to the point of production, close to centres of nuclear expertise and infrastructure. The Lucas Heights nuclear agency ANSTO is by far the biggest single source of the waste, and all the relevant organisations have acknowledged that ongoing waste storage at Lucas Heights is a viable option — the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, the Australian Nuclear Association and even Mr Ferguson's own department. Additionally, requiring ANSTO to store its own waste is the best — and perhaps the

only — way of focussing the Organisation's collective mind on the importance of waste minimisation principles.

Any site selection process ought to be based on scientific and environmental siting criteria, as well as on the principle of voluntarism. In 2005, the Howard government chose the NT, and ruled out NSW, for purely political reasons. When the federal Bureau of Resource Sciences conducted a national repository site selection study in the 1990s, informed by scientific, environmental and social criteria, the Muckaty area did not even make the short-list as a "suitable" site.

The changes made to the **National Radioactive Waste Management Bill** take me, not so fondly, back to the days of the Jo Bjelke era in Queensland in the late 70's when he decided that instead of having to deal with the rabble and ratbags opposing his uranium stance he would just make it illegal for the them to gather...how little we have learned. Instead of strong, democratically and scientifically based decisions about placement we just choose the most remote and least electorally powerful group to coherse into compliance.

We do not accept your decision and we do not accept your bill

Robyn Hopkins