

Please accept this as my submission to the senate enquiry on the proposed National Nuclear Waste Dump.

I have been informed that the case for a remote dump has never been made and I know that nuclear waste should be moved as little as possible. It should be stored above ground close to the point of production, close to centers 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.

I believe that ANSTO should store its own waste as this is the best — and perhaps the only — way of focusing the Organisation's collective mind on the importance of waste minimisation principles.

Any site selection process ought to be based on scientific and environmental selection siting criteria, as well as on the principle of voluntarism.

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. Therefore why is it being considered now?

This proposed bill is highly coercive in that:

Section 11 of the bill explicitly overrides any state or territory laws that would hinder site selection.

Section 12 then eliminates Aboriginal interests (the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984) and environmental interests (the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999) from the process of choosing a site.

Section 13 eliminates the property rights of any individual unlucky enough to be in the path of the dump or its access corridors.

The proposed Bill also places enormous power in the hands of the Minister to assess whether or not the Muckaty site should go ahead. No information is given to how this assessment will be carried out, and the bill makes it clear that local people have no right of appeal.

It is essential that the Senate Committee pay due respects to the Traditional Owners by travelling to Tennant Creek to take evidence from them directly.

The nomination of the Muckaty site by the Northern Land Council is 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. Why has this been ignored?

Please re-assess and ensure the process for the proposed national nuclear dump site is carried out in the utmost appropriate and ethical manner.

Form Letter received by:

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