

Jurjevic, Dijana (SEN)

From: Adam Dempsey [adamjdempsey@yahoo.com.au]
Sent: Friday, 18 November 2005 9:09 AM
To: EET, Committee (SEN)
Subject: CwIth Rad Waste Management Bill Inquiry Submission



2000874979-
mp Sen Inqui

Dear Senator Troeth,

Please accept this submission (below and attached) to the Inquiry into Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005.

The Chair - Senator Judith Troeth
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee

Inquiry into Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005

Re: National Radioactive Waste Repository

18 Nov 2005

I write to urge Senator Scullion to exercise his ability in the Senate to cross the floor to vote against this proposed bill for a national radioactive waste dump for the northern Territory – something previously committed to do (ABC radio 19/8/05).

I am concerned that this Inquiry period is far too short to deal with the complexity of the issues involved and find it insulting that the committee has not bothered to travel to the NT to hear directly from the most affected community.

The three possible repository sites have been proposed and the bill introduced with zero consultation with communities or the NT Government and also in direct knowledge of opposition to the repositories and associated transports by State governments, emergency services, councils, communities, indigenous people, environment groups and concerned voters.

That this legislation would be set to override State and Territory laws regarding nuclear waste disposal and related transports sets a precedent that would span generations of people who will not have this choice about long lived radioactive materials.

I understand that a repository is part of a “waste management” requirement for the Operating Licence application for the OPAL nuclear research reactor currently under construction at Lucas Heights – a reactor that is not needed for the production of radioisotopes for cutting edge nuclear medicine. Claims about the need for the dump in order to maintain access to high quality nuclear medicine are contradicted by senior medical professionals including the former head of medical research at the Lucas Heights nuclear facility - Professor Barry Allen. (Demand can be adequately met through importation and domestic production using existing particle accelerator alternatives . Further to this, a fraction of this project’s official cost of \$330 – \$500 million taxpayer dollars put into researching cyclotron generation of Technetium99m could see

Australia become a true forerunner in nuclear medicine and expertise).

To this, there are several instances around the world in which research reactors have been, or are still, used for producing weapons fuel. The Lucas Heights facility, itself, has historically undermined the Australia's stated commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Conclusions from the NSW Government call for "nil risk" with regard to transport and storage of nuclear waste. In addition, the Science Minister tries to play down the types of wastes created and transported from Lucas Heights and the size of the reactor. The truth, however, is that it's the radioactive risk that remains high. In fact it's a credible terrorism risk, acknowledged by ANSTO itself.

Terrorism risks remain credible risks at nuclear reactors, stores of spent fuel (high level waste) and associated transports of wastes. ANSTO's emergency modeling remains secret, whilst Lucas Heights residents would be at the mercy of Potassium Iodide tablets which would prevent intake of radioactive Iodine – only ONE of many radioactive materials that would be released in the event of accident or attack.

Whilst South Australian Premier Mike Rann opposed the waste dump near Woomera but supports the expansion of Olympic Dam copper/uranium mine – which already stores over 40 hectares of long lived (including 80,000 year half-life) radioactive tailings waste, the ability of Senator Scullion to keep his promise to the Northern Territory to oppose this legislation will help ensure a cleaner, safer future including the prevention of at least another 40 years of intermediate long-lived wastes from Lucas Heights and deadly high level (spent fuel) wastes.

I trust in the best, safest outcome in opposing radioactive waste repository proposals opposed by so many in your constituency that would encourage only further generation of such wastes. I look forward to you making the right decision based on accountability for Territorians, those along transport routes and all future Australians.

Yours faithfully,

Adam Dempsey

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