

## **ARRERENTE NATIONS CAMPAIGN: NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP THREATENS HUMAN RIGHTS!**

The Commonwealth Government plans to build a nuclear waste dump on the Arrernte traditional lands in Central Australia and this is without consultation nor agreement by the Arrernte people and the broader community.

The history leading up to the current debate of uranium mining in Australia only magnifies the betrayal by a government to enforce the people of the Northern Territory to accommodate plans for a waste dump as part of the Commonwealth's disingenuous scheme for nuclear power.

Australia has a reprehensible and appalling history shrouded by a secrecy of nuclear power research and atomic testing beginning on Monte Bello Island and on the Anangu traditional lands in South Australia as part of the British Weapons Program during World War II.

This has continued with the increase of uranium mining activities over the years along with the threat of a waste dump recently planned for Woomera. Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta were very instrumental and strong with the support of the South Australian government in standing up to the Commonwealth in their campaign to stop the waste dump coming onto their traditional lands and now it is coming to Arrernte country.

Plans to build a nuclear waste dump on our homeland is a legacy that began back in the early seventies and is a national threat to all people in the broader community with drastic results that would affect the land, plant and animal life and the environment. It is also a diversionary tactic of the Commonwealth Government to manipulate 'democracy' in all sense of the word based on the rationale of a 'few more seats' to stay in power.

Where is the evidence of research into nuclear power conducted by scientists to honestly tell the people of Australia that any toxic waste is safe? Where is the environmental impact study or community driven independent inquiry to tell us that the mine sites and waste management is definitely under control and that we can be one hundred per cent assured that nuclear power is a sufficient source of energy for electricity and proficient to combat global warming?

The Commonwealth Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) has stated that the waste storage facility will only accommodate safe, low level, intermediate level waste and not be inclusive of the high level radioactive waste from 'spent fuel rods' that has since stockpiled at the Lucas Heights reactor site, as well as collective waste from around the country that is earmarked for the waste dump on Arrernte land in the Northern Territory.

The Commonwealth has not listened to the people of Australia about atomic testing and active and past uranium mining activities and how this has already affected the people and contaminated the land and the environment.

This is without the decency to acknowledge past atrocities caused by the detonation and fallout of atomic testing on Monte Bello Island, Maralinga and Emu Fields with drastic affects for the Australian ex-servicemen and horrendous results that remain with Anangu in South Australia.

The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's licence application for a replacement reactor at Lucas Heights in New South Wales and the uranium 'boom' with the Northern Territory 'open for business' stands as a direct national threat for all Australians that brings with it the 'side-kick' issue of an international waste dump on Arrernte land in the Northern Territory.

What is the cost of the lives of millions of Australians as well as the land, water and environment that is priceless for future generations to what the government now identifies as 'economic growth figures' within the nuclear power industry?

As part of the Northern Territory's economy surely Central Australians contribute millions towards Australia's capital growth figures within the respective industry such as; employment and training, tourism that features our national treasures which interprets the uniqueness of Aboriginal art and culture, local history and land formation, along with the reputation of the 'clean, green beef' of the cattle industry, the marketing, produce and export of domestic foods, bush tucker and an empire of retail and small business enterprises.

In a society that is governed by a 'democratic system' and as citizens of this country we have a human right to be consulted and have our concerns and questions answered within a civil manner well before demands for a waste storage facility and further uranium mining are unjustifiably dumped on Territorians.

The Commonwealth Government must consult with the broader community of Australia and explore other avenues for the location of an international waste dump to accommodate high level radioactive waste that is planned for the proposed storage facility.

The licence application for the new reactor at Lucas Heights must be reviewed by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) in light of further nuclear waste accumulating from uranium mining activities and to this regard safety and protection measures from the operations of a nuclear power reactor that imposes future health risks for all Australians.

Arrernte people do not agree to the Commonwealth Government's proposals for a waste dump nor do we agree to the idea of any type of settlement to manipulate our traditional

rights and interests to 'sell' our land, our dreamings, our law and culture as the land is our life and Arrernte people belong to the country in this way.

We are the Arrernte Nations, strong and proud and we are Apmereke Artweye and Kwertengwerle for our country. This is Arrernte land where our people have lived for thousands of years following in the steps of our ancestors managing and caring for the land. The elders hold our traditional laws as we continue to protect the dreaming and through sharing our land we have come to live in peace and harmony with all Australians.

The Commonwealth Government must openly and in cohesion with the broader community address nuclear power in its entirety and do so in the right way that provides protection for the earth and balances life with the land and its resources for now and for the sake of future generations.

We have the sun, wind and water that are alternative natural sources of energy and in all his creation, God has given us only one earth that gives us life and is as precious as the air that we breathe.

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**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:**

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