

Ref: GE1024

Committee Secretary
Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee
Department of Senate
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

**RE: COMMONWEALTH RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT BILL 2005
AND COMMONWEALTH RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT (RELATED
AMENDMENT) BILL 2005**

The Senate Committee may be aware Alice Springs Town Council has publicly voiced its concern regarding the lack of government consultation for the proposed establishment of a radioactive waste facility within the Northern Territory.

The short timeline of this Senate inquiry is perceived as token consultation and perhaps could more accurately be described as communication rather than genuine consultation. It is also most disappointing that the Senate Inquiry is only receiving written inquiries and not travelling to the Northern Territory to enable them to receive submissions directly from the affected communities.

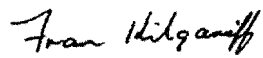
In July 2005, the Australian Government announced that the new Radioactive Waste Facility would be at one of three sites in the Northern Territory. The first that Alice Springs Town Council knew of this initiative was when the Mayor heard an announcement on a local radio broadcast. The failure to consult with Alice Springs Town Council was clearly not consistent with the recent undertaking made by the Prime Minister with the Australian Local Government Association President to ensure that the three levels of government worked closely together. Alice Springs Town Council aims to work with all levels of government to support our vibrant and growing communities. Whilst Council may not always agree on all decisions, the Australian Government should ensure that it consults with Council on major issues recognising that our residents have a right to participate in decisions which affect them.

In 2003, the Australian Government selected a site near Woomera in South Australia for the national repository and storage of radioactive waste. By mid 2004 the Government, following significant political pressure, abandoned these plans.

States and Territories have accepted the need for the safe and secure disposal of low – level waste. However no State or Territory Government has expressed an interest in locating such a facility in their State/Territory. It is imperative that the future radioactive waste site is selected on sound technical/scientific advice and not a compromised political decision.

Unfortunately Alice Springs Town Council is unable to make any further contribution to the Senate Inquiry due to the limited consultation period to respond to this important public health issue.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fran Kilgariff". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fran Kilgariff
MAYOR

18 November 2005