

**McMahon, Rosalind (SEN)**

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**From:** Patrick.O'Leary@csiro.au  
**Sent:** Friday, 18 November 2005 5:13 PM  
**To:** EET, Committee (SEN)  
**Subject:** submission to radioactive waste dump inquiry-radioactive waste management bill 2005

## Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education  
Legislation Committee

# Inquiry into the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005

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**Submitter: Patrick  
O'Leary**

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I wish to make a submission to the current inquiry on siting a radioactive waste dump in the Northern Territory. I oppose the siting of a dump in the NT because:

- There has been no convincing case made for why Australia needs a national dump as opposed to the current situation of storage near site of production

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- The transport of radioactive waste is inherently risky and poses unacceptable risk all along the transport route.
- The current government is adamant that we are subject to terrorist threat. Transporting waste and creating a national waste dump creates extra dangerous terrorist targets if the government's terrorism risk premise is held to be accurate.
- This raises the risk of transporting waste by sea through Darwin Harbour which poses an unacceptable risk to the environment and lifestyle of Territorians.
- The decision to locate a dump in the Northern Territory has not been made according to rigorous scientific criteria but rather through political expediency
- The reassurances about safety of the radioactive waste storage process indicate that there is no need to transport waste so far through Australia.
- The generation of radiopharmaceuticals from the Lucas Heights reactor can be replaced by other measure such as cyclotrons so the lack of a national dump site has no bearing whatsoever on the availability of these medicines and poses no credible threat to Australia's health services..
- Intense international pressure to store radioactive waste from other countries will be likely to see any NT dump expand to become an international dump.
- The government gave explicit assurances to Northern Territorians prior to the federal election that there would be no radioactive waste dump in the Northern Territory.
- At no stage have the indigenous traditional owners nor the non aboriginal occupants and users of proposed dump sites been consulted about the decision to locate a dump on their land
- Some of the dump sites are subject to seasonal inundation thus risking contamination of waterbodies with radioactive material

In closing this brief submission I would like to point out that the hearing of this important matter over such a short period shows contempt for parliament and democracy in Australia, that the same committee is considering the government's industrial relations Bill further devalues and weakens the inquiry process. It is difficult not to be cynical about the integrity of the government in allowing these inquiries only such a short time. I request that the Senate oppose moves to create a national radioactive waste dump in the Northern Territory.