

McMahon, Rosalind (SEN)

From: Ellie [eleanor.anne@gmail.com] on behalf of Eleanor Smith [s4056495@student.uq.edu.au]
Sent: Friday, 18 November 2005 3:38 PM
To: EET, Committee (SEN)
Subject: 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

November 15th, 2005

Dear Ms Troeth,

I am writing to you about my concerns regarding the *Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005*.

Firstly, I am disappointed that the government has reneged on a previous promise by Environment Minister Ian Campbell that a nuclear waste repository would not be sited on mainland Australia.

Among my concerns are the location of a nuclear waste repository, thousands of kilometres from the site of it's generation. It raises important questions about safety, given the distance waste will have to travel in relatively unsecured form. It presents far too great a risk to the communities along it's trajectory, all of whom should be given the opportunity to debate this issue. I am also concerned that it presents an easier target for ill-will. It is the right of all Australians to live in a safe environment, this bill compromises that.

Not the least of my concerns is the haste with which the government seeks to push through this legislation. There appears to be no compelling case for rushing through legislation that is liable to effect many Australians, especially those indigenous people's on whose land a nuclear waste repository will be placed. Given the widespread opposition to it amongst political and community groups, it is imperative that any decision takes into consideration their views to be democratic. To make a decision without the acquiescence of the community goes against the wishes of the International Atomic Energy Agency that 'social license' be given.

Finally, I am not convinced that there is even a need for such a repository. There are alternatives for nuclear medicine and these should be explored. Professor Barry Allen, former head of Lucas Heights nuclear facility has this view. Investment in more nuclear infrastructure commits this government financially to only the nuclear medicine option.

I urge you to:

- Reconsider the need for a nuclear repository: there are safer and cheaper alternatives without expanding reliance on nuclear technology;
- Extend the discussion period so that a truly democratic decision can be made about such an important and to many people including myself, threatening proposal.
- Listen to the people this proposal will affect. Government exists for the people, Australia belongs to the people, not the government. Decisions about the use of Australian land should be done with the full consultation of the indigenous people and all Australians.

Thank you for your time,
Regards,