

The Chair - Senator Judith Troeth

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Committee

Inquiry into Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 200

I would like to make a submission to the Senate Committee Inquiry into the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005.

There are many levels upon which I oppose this bill.

As a former resident of outback Australia, I find it deplorable that city dwelling politicians think that the outback is "empty" and therefore appropriate to dump whatever waste they cannot be bothered dealing with in the cities. No more than a cursory glance would reveal the intricate balance between the many facets of nature and its traditional owners.

This is a blatant example of ignoring the **intra-generational equity** which is a central pillar for Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD).

As an Environmental Scientist, I find the lack of effort that has gone into the consideration of an appropriate site as quite simply pathetic. Is it laziness, or have the scientists in charge of this project got no concept of the longevity and dangers to the environment that a radioactive waste dump will pose for many generations to come. Why is hydrology not the number one consideration for location of the site? Are you happy to leave a poisoned aquifer for our grandchildren. Please review some papers or journals on ESD, your proposal completely ignores the issues of **inter-generational equity**.

As a former Member of the Sutherland Shire Nuclear Waste Sub-Committee, I cannot understand the urgency to rush this through. The issues are very complex and as the wastes are so long-lived, surely a thorough and comprehensive study should be undertaken, addressing the technical requirements, environmental issues and the wishes of the traditional owners in the land before anything else is done. I understand that studies have been done before for the proposed dump in SA, but these should be done again with a focus on the specific proposed sites. Being in a hurry is no reason to short-cut the necessary science. Just because you have failed once doesn't mean you don't have to do the job properly the next time.

I also suggest that considering radioactive waste in isolation from the rest of the Uranium fuel cycle is naïve, short-sighted and bordering on deceitful to the Australian public. A visionary, competent and responsible Government would use the opportunity of establishment of a waste dump presents as an opportunity to develop a strategy to deal with the full life cycle of radioactive products from Uranium mining to the waste dump.

Some advice as you are obviously struggling to work out how to locate a waste dump; Stop trying to rush this past everyone. Do the job properly, comprehensively and inclusively and you may come up with an appropriate site. Rush it, cut corners, and bulldoze over the concerns of the traditional owners and their supporters and you won't get anywhere.

Thank you,