

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
Legislation Committee

Inquiry into the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2005

Submission no: 231

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Submitter: Mr Wirilma Mununggurr

Organisation: Djapu Clan
North East Arnhem Land

Address: Lot 39, Webb Way
YIRRKALA NT

Phone: 08 8987 1685

Fax: 08 8987 1443

Email:

Mr Yunupingu and the NLC have no right or authority, traditional or otherwise, to call for a nuclear waste facility in our region, unless they have consulted with, and have the consent of all the other traditional owners whose land estates would also be affected by such a facility.

Mr Tollner's comments are both incorrect, misleading and offensive, and demonstrates his ignorance of Aboriginal culture and law. Mr Galarrwuy Yunupingu is not even the senior traditional owner / law man for his own Gumatj Clan, much less for all the other clans in North East Arnhem Land. His 'power' and profile has come from his position in 'whitefella' legal structures – not from the Yolngu people or our law.

If the Government and NLC want to do things in our country, on our land, it is time they came and spoke to us directly – to the clan leaders, clans and communities - not just to so called 'representatives'.

As the senior traditional owner of the Djapu Clan, I say I do not want such a facility anywhere that might affect our land, rivers or sea country. We are very concerned about the safety and environmental impacts of such a facility and the transport of wastes. We are also concerned how the security and surveillance that must accompany such a facility may impact on our lives and region.

The other 12 clans of this region, who would inevitably have their lives and culture affected by the establishment of such a facility, also need to be given the opportunity to learn about these proposals and to make their views known.

Mr David Wirilma Mununggurr
Senior Traditional Owner & Law Man
Djapu Clan of North East Arnhem Land
Lot 39 Webb Way
YIRRKALA, NT.
(08) 8987-1685

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