



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Industry,**  
**Innovation and Science**

Mr Ted O'Brien  
Committee Secretary  
Standing Committee on Environment and Energy  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Members

A prerequisite for the establishment of a nuclear energy industry in Australia would be for the planning of safe and secure management of radioactive waste prior to generation. This submission seeks to explain why the currently proposed National Radioactive Waste Management Facility should not be considered as a solution to the disposal of waste generated from the nuclear energy cycle.

The department, through the National Radioactive Waste Management Taskforce, is responsible for the administration of the *National Radioactive Waste Management Act 2012* which sets out a legislated process for the establishment of a National Radioactive Waste Management Facility to manage radioactive waste.


The Australian Government is committed to siting the facility on voluntarily nominated land that is technically suitable and where community support can be obtained. The waste management facility currently proposed for one of three sites in two communities in South Australia, has been designed to permanently dispose of low level waste and temporarily store intermediate level waste.

Australian and international best practice has community support at the centre of a process to establish a waste management facility. The two South Australian communities are preparing to participate in ballots that will contribute to the government's understanding of support for the proposed facility to be located in their communities. This is a part of a broader assessment of community sentiment which has included a submissions process, numerous community meetings, discussion with Indigenous Representative groups, and upcoming surveys of businesses and neighbours.

Consultations with the communities have been based on the premise that the proposed facility would primarily support the Australian nuclear medicine industry - not a nuclear energy industry. The facility has not been designed for the disposal or temporary storage of high level waste that would result from the nuclear energy cycle. A different type of facility, likely a deep geological one, will be needed for permanent disposal of high level waste.

The department remains available to assist the Committee with any further questions about the proposed National Radioactive Waste Management Facility.

Yours sincerely

  
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General Manager  
National Radioactive Waste Management Facility Taskforce  
Northern Australia and Major Projects Division

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