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Senator the Hon Matthew Canavan

Minister for Resources and Northern Australia

MS18-000969

Mayor Dean Johnson
District Council of Kimba
PO Box 189 Cross Street
KIMBA SA 5641

Dear Mayor

Thank you for your letter of 11 April 2018 on setting out the Council's view on the timing of the proposed community ballot on the National Radioactive Waste Management (NRWM) Facility (the Facility), the information required by the community prior to the vote and the financial and services benefits that should be offered to community for hosting the facility.

Firstly, I would like to thank Council members for their engagement on the NRWM Facility process to date, particularly their unremitting advocacy for an informed and transparent community debate. The Australian Government shares this view, which is why we have placed the community at the centre of the site selection process through the community ballot and public submission process, the establishment of the Kimba Consultative Committee and Economic Working Group, our direct engagements with community members, community newsletters, and the publication of online information.

As I have previously committed, the department will be providing the community with more detail on the Facility prior to the ballot. This will cover the proposed design and operation of the Facility, jobs, site characterisation and the financial and service benefits available to the host community. I have attached a schedule detailing the timing of information, that the department will provide the community, for your reference ([Attachment A](#)). If there is additional information you believe would assist the community please contact the department through the local office at Kimba or Mr Bruce Wilson in Canberra.

In terms of the timing of the vote, I have taken Council's advice to hold the ballot before 4 September 2018 and I am requesting the Council's support to undertake the ballot with papers to be issued on 20 August 2018. This timing would align with the same proposal to Flinders Ranges Council and Outback Communities Authority for both ballots to occur simultaneously. I am advised that there should be a five week ballot period to allow the mail out and return of papers from some of the remote properties north of Hawker. Allowing for ballot counting this would mean that that the vote results would be known by 28 September 2018.

I would also propose that the same arrangements apply as for the previous ballot at Kimba which would see it conducted by the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) on behalf of the Kimba District Council. The feedback I have received suggest this worked well and was strongly supported by the community. My department has spoken to the AEC which has indicated it is prepared to undertake the ballot on Council's behalf.

The AEC have advised that it will need to confirm the parameters of the vote with Council, in particular the proposed boundaries, the roll to be used and the question/s to be asked. It will also want to confirm arrangements for scrutineers. While these are ultimately a matter for Council, I believe that the default position should be to use the parameters applied in the previous ballot, noting that the question will now need to be framed so that it elicits an unambiguous view from voters on their support for hosting the Facility in the Kimba community.

As you would be aware, I attended the recent Kimba Consultative Committee (KCC) where members requested an opportunity to provide their views on the approach to the community ballot. I believe that it is important that the KCC have an opportunity to provide input and I understand that the issue will be discussed at its next meeting on 17 May 2018.

I have asked the department to support the Council in working with the AEC to finalise the arrangements for the ballot, including arranging full compensation for any associated expenses.

In terms of the long-term economic benefits for the host community, thank you for your proposal for a long-term community capital fund and advice on the preferred size, structure and administration of the fund. I also understand and agree with need for the community to make decisions on the use of the fund. Thank you also for your suggestions on the additional services that could be supported by the Facility.

While I am not in a position to commit to a specific package at this point, your suggestions have considerable merit and I will definitely take them into account in finalising the package we present back to the community prior to the vote. As you will appreciate the Government will need to ensure an equivalence in its offer to the two possible host communities and that the final package should also take account of the expected co-benefits from construction and operation of the Facility. Again I have instructed my department to work with the Council, the Kimba Consultative Committee and the Kimba Economic Working Group in developing more detailed suggestions.

Thank you again for the efforts and engagement of the Council on behalf of the Kimba community, and I look forward to progressing the issues outlined in our discussions.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Canavan

Encl. (1)

ATTACHMENT A

Information topic	Expected Timing
NRWMF Governance	Early May
NRWMF Jobs	Early May
NRWMF Waste Acceptance Criteria	Mid May
NRWMF and Agriculture	Late May
NRWMF Environment, Safety and Security	Early June
NRWMF Design	Mid June
NRWMF Transport	Early July
NRWMF Aboriginal Cultural Heritage	Mid July
NRWMF Site Suitability	Mid July
NRMWF Infrastructure & enabling services	Mid July
NRWMF Long-term community package	Mid July
NRWMF Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Economic Participation Plan	Mid July
Senate Inquiry reports	14 August
NRWMF Vote	20 August
NRWMF Vote results	Late September
NRWMF Community Sentiment Report	Early October