



# caring for South Australia

**To: Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works**

**Inquiry: "ANSTO Intermediate Level Solid Waste Storage Facility Lucas Heights, NSW"**

**Public Submission by Caring for South Australia**

Caring for South Australia welcomes the chance to make a submission to the Public Works Committee on this important issue.

For PWC Members' convenience we summarise our submission:

**With no final site available for ANSTO nuclear waste and Intermediate long-lived Radioactive Waste, Caring for South Australia strongly recommends the necessity for ANSTO's proposed public works be altered to enable extended storage of its Intermediate Long lived Radioactive Waste on-site at Lucas Heights until the building and availability of a final disposal option.**

**Our submission proceeds to give reasons for the Recommendation.**

1. We put it to the committee that it is in the national site that the proximity of the nation's nuclear experts, substantial security buildings and high-level experienced security personnel make this ANSTO site itself the perfect option for the nation's nuclear waste. This is of course the nation's most dangerous material - which government, government department officials and above all the scientists of Lucas Heights itself know to be toxic for an extraordinary 10,000 years.
2. The fact that the ANSTO site has attracted \$59.8 million in the recent Federal budget augurs well for government trust in the facility's security and longevity. We are aware that contrary to the assertions of some, that ANSTO's waste, classified intermediate long lived radioactive waste 'can be safely stored at ANSTO for decades to come.' (CEO of the regulator, ARPANSA to the Senate Inquiry 2020). There is no rush.
3. Caring for SA acknowledge that Nuclear medicine *use* creates very little waste. However, our members are only too aware that the *production* of the increasing nuclear waste is an initiative of ANSTO's desire to build an industry far beyond national needs with an ever-increasing export market. We therefore strongly recommend that the PWC use their influence to ensure ANSTO itself house the growing nuclear waste they have created in later years, The heavily subsidised production of nuclear medicine export industry at Lucas Heights is steadily increasing to be 25-30 times what is needed in Australia thus producing a great deal of waste. *This waste is radioactive for 10,000 years- it needs to be properly disposed of, not "temporarily stored" as in an above ground store in a regional far distant site.* ANSTO is the safest place for this waste. ANSTO needs to take responsibility for what it is doing,

4. Despite optimistic claims to the contrary, small communities like Kimba and its 95% agricultural dependence, have no government guarantee against health and economic damage from such a nuclear waste facility. Obviously it is beyond optimism to claim that the benefits of such a facility will outweigh the likelihood of the demise or certainly the devolution of long-term profitable agricultural industry by the former's proximity.

5. Caring for SA must note also the claims of the Barngarla Traditional Owners as this matter and the process to date breaches the human rights of the Barngarla people. The "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People" (2007) Article 29 calls on States *"to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous material shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free prior and informed consent."* The Barngarla people are unanimously opposed to the dump, and are planning a legal challenge.

As recently as 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2021, Mr Jason Bilney, Chair of the Barngarla Determination Aboriginal Corporation (BDAC) explained this aberration of their rights: "The simple fact remains that even though the Barngarla hold Native Title land closer to the proposed facility than the town of Kimba, the First Peoples for the area were not allowed to vote."

6. The BDAC's Chair's further point leads to our concluding Safety concern of the current plan of continuing transport of ANSTO's most dangerous material 1700 kilometres across the country: "It's about being open and transparent, it should have been put to us and all South Australians affected, what about all the towns who will now have nuclear waste trucked through, where was their say."

It is clearly ingenuous for long-term opposing arguments to claim that .01% of South Australians, (that is the people with property within a small country town) only be afforded a say in such a serious matter, when South Australians and others along the transport corridors are so clearly at risk. Accidents happen.

7. Caring for SA reiterates that all such dangers and aberration of rights can be avoided by ANSTO's intermediate long lived Intermediate radioactive waste and fuel waste remaining safely onsite where it is until the final best practice underground solution is available. We note that in ANSTO's own submission to the PWC the point is strongly made of the facility's isolation: *'Given (7.4) the isolated location of the ANSTO site at Lucas Heights....'*

**8. We conclude therefore with our Recommendation: With no final site available for ANSTO nuclear waste and Intermediate long-lived Radioactive Waste, Caring for South Australia strongly recommends the necessity of ANSTO's proposed public works be altered to enable extended storage of its Intermediate Long lived Radioactive Waste on-site at Lucas Heights until the building and availability of a final disposal option.**

Thank you for receiving our Submission.

Robyn Jenkin



Caring for SA

30<sup>th</sup> July 2021



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