

Caring for South Australia

The Secretary c/o economics.sen@aph.gov.au
Senate Standing Economics Legislation Committee of Inquiry
National Radioactive Waste Management Amendment Bill 2020

As South Australians concerned about food security in our State, we have come together as an independent group disturbed about a federal government proposal which will jeopardise South Australian food production. We state our concerns to the Inquiry as follows:

The federal government is planning to transport all of Australia's long-lived intermediate radioactive waste 1700 kilometres across the nation to be simply stored again in the international grain farming land of the Kimba region, next to a planned low-level waste facility. There are no plans for its permanent disposal. Toxic for an unimaginable 10,000 years, this federal nuclear waste, presently safely stored at Lucas Heights in southern Sydney, is classified in France as high-level nuclear waste. Despite federal government emphasis to the contrary continuing access to nuclear medicine is not dependent on a nuclear waste dump and the absence of such a facility has not hindered the practice of nuclear medicine.

According to *Primary Industries and Regions SA* just over 4.5% of our state is agricultural cropping land. We simply cannot run the risk of having a facility such as the nuclear dump in any area where food and fibre is grown. In the future with the complication of changes to our environment due to the onset of climate change we Australians will need every hectare of arable land to produce the food that we need for ourselves, let alone to export.

We have heard for ourselves the extreme concerns of many of the Kimba farmers, including some excluded by the stringent limitations of the local vote. We put before the Inquiry also the extreme concerns of the Barngarla Traditional Owners. Having successfully obtained their native title rights to the area after a 20 year struggle, the Barngarla were devastated to learn that they were excluded from the vote. What makes this more outrageous is that Aboriginal people in SA have *never* been excluded from voting since universal franchise was enacted in 1894.

We have concerns about transporting the radioactive material: we put before the Inquiry that astoundingly there has been no consultation at all concerning the particular SA port at which the nuclear waste will arrive. Nor has there been any consultation with towns and settlements along the 1700 kilometre route from Lucas Heights. In fact, residents of towns and settlements on the intended route have not even been notified that radioactive material will be transported through their neighbourhoods.

We strongly believe that, had all South Australians been properly informed about the initial plan to situate a radio-active waste facility in our state; and if we had been provided with the opportunity to express our opinions by being able to vote on the issue, then we as a state would have overwhelmingly rejected the proposal.

Finally, the danger to South Australia's clean, green image, and the stigma of the radioactive waste label to South Australia, as well as the obvious long term dangers to our environment are clear. In the light of the many deficiencies we have outlined in our brief submission, *Caring for SA* propose to the Inquiry that until an independent scientific commission is established to resolve the matter, that Australia's intermediate long lived waste continue to be stored in the spacious ANSTO facility where the nuclear experts and experienced safety personnel are located.

Thank you for receiving our submission.

Yours sincerely,

Robyn Jenkin

for *Caring for SA*

25th March 2020