

Julie Dennett,
Committee Secretary,
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee,
PO Box 6100,
Parliament House,
Canberra, ACT, 2600.

Re dumping of nuclear waste on Muckaty Station

The dumping of nuclear waste on Aboriginal land continues the disgraceful behaviour of present and past Australian governments since the 50s. First we made Maralinga unlivable and exposed Aboriginal people to ongoing radiation of large areas of their land. Then it took another fifteen years before the British were coerced into removing radioactive nucleotides in a demonstratively inadequate manner in the late 60s (22 kgm of plutonium were removed - 2 kgm of this lethal stuff still left - enough to kill a small city)

Then in the late 90s ARPANSA did yet another inadequate clean-up - no underground concrete bunkers as other countries- eg Finland - just some soil over the waste.

While the government is talking about dumping low level waste , we have no guarantees that the present government will be any less reckless than previouir governments.

The political advantage of putting a dump on Aboriginal land is that a) it is remote, so few people can protest and b) Aboriginal people may be less informed about the risks than other Australians (though I doubt this) It is a cowardly way to do business and shows that the present government is no more respectful of the autonomy of Aboriginal people than our forbears.

The proximity of the proposed dump to the Alice-Springs to Darwin railway line would indicate that the government may be considering the dumping of waste from overseas - there is no country in the world, with the possible exception of some Scandinavian countries, which are not having problems with leakage and vented radiation - especially France and the US. The US has a major problem and as our governments appear incapable of saying no to anything the US wants, we are very likely to have a much larger and infinitely more dangerous problem.

As Muckaty Station is to Sydney, Australia is to the the US. Out of sight, out of mind.

This situation should be the subject of widespread debate via the media and local meetings. It is too important a subject to be left in the hands of one man - Martin Ferguson - who chooses not to debate it at all. The waste from Lucas Heights should be buried in containers built using best practice near to the site, so that the dangers of transport will be minimised.

The storage of nuclear waste is an international problem, not a cash cow for speculative companies.

Yours faithfully

Dr Lois Achimovich