



Stephen Darley,
[REDACTED]

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Senate Standing Committee on Economics
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
Sent by email and post : economics.sen@aph.gov.au

SUBMISSION ON PROPOSED NUCLEAR WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITIES IN SA

We wish to respond to your Terms of Reference in relation to the appropriateness and thoroughness of the site selection process for a national radioactive waste management facility at Kimba and Hawke in South Australia, noting that the Government has stated that it will not impose such a facility on an unwilling community.

Our first response is to query whether your committee has given cognisance of the results of the recent Royal Commission into the Nuclear Fuel Cycle held in Adelaide in 2015, where the Citizens Jury (representing citizens selected at random and given comprehensive, expert information, overwhelming voted that they wanted NO part of the nuclear cycle developed here. This included nuclear waste management facilities.

The SA government agreed to abide by this decision. Consequently we would like to know under what legislation the Commonwealth can now override this decision and welcome your response to this query.

We make the following comments in response to your terms of reference :

a) The financial compensation offered to applicants for the acquisition of land under the Nominations of Land Guidelines:

This is a vexed issue as we would prefer that this proposal does not proceed, but should it do so, we believe that an independent panel should recommend the appropriate compensation where required and no land should be compulsorily acquired without the full consent of the owner and the surrounding community agreeing to any facility placement in their vicinity.

b) How the need for “broad community support” has played and will continue to play a part in the process, including:

i) The definition of ‘broad community support’ and

It is imperative that the broadest possible support be obtained before proceeding further as this is a national project that could affect other States where waste material is transported from. Transport, whether by sea, rail or road, will be a major hurdle for the proposed project as many communities have actively campaigned against waste material being trucked or shipped through their community (ie the sustained Port Adelaide and South Australians opposition to earlier proposed nuclear waste facilities. Not only is safe transport a major concern, but also the water table being contaminated if a spill occurs or the facility is not secured safely underground. We have no details of the type of facility proposed but all proposed waste management facilities, even low and intermediate level nuclear waste are recommended to be stored in very stable rock at considerable distance underground. How can people make a decision when they have no details of the actual storage being proposed ? To ask people to consent to transport and storage of toxic waste (which could conceivably increase to high level nuclear waste at some future date) is disingenuous. Citizens must have all the proposed site facts put before them so that they can make a well informed decision on how this could/would impact on their State and/or community.

We recommend that both local, state and nationwide support be sought with all the above pertinent facts on the proposed structure, transport and guarantee, including exactly what level nuclear waste would be housed, with a firm guarantee that this would not be increased over time.

A response level of 90% YES vote would be appropriate to ensure this proposal does have wide, genuine support – perhaps a postal vote would be the way forward. This process should also be carried out by an independent body.

i) How broad community support has been or will be determined for each process advancement stage. Our response is incorporated in the above recommendation.

c) How any need for Indigenous support has played and will continue to play a part in the process including how indigenous support has been or will be

determined for each process advancement stage;

We believe it is paramount that the Australian government fully outline and commit to whatever level of nuclear waste material would ever be stored at these sites. There is talk of intermediate level waste (and perhaps even high level). These levels require very stringent and specific storage sites which we doubt are available at the areas selected ie stored in stable geological rock for thousands of years with no possibility of leaching into any water table – mindful that the Artesian Basin is closeby which stores most of Australia's underground water. Your proposal needs to cover all the levels of waste and how they will be stored in full compliance with international standards.

It is paramount that indigenous peoples, especially around the proposed sites, **should be in agreement first**, before proceeding to canvass wider state and national support. Our local knowledge and experience, doubts that this will occur as we are mindful of the sustained and successful campaigns opposing any nuclear waste facilities in South Australia in the past, especially the Kunga Juta Aboriginal Women's successful campaign to stop nuclear waste facilities on their land in the 1990s. They remember the consequences of the Maralinga Tests which adversely affected many of their communities, so there is a strong resistance to any nuclear waste facilities. Their combined support for such a facility would need to be evident through signatures and spokespeople standing up publicly to support any proposal, before canvassing this idea further.

d) Whether and how the Government's community benefit program payments affect broad community and indigenous community sentiment;

We are not cognisant of the community benefits program but suggest that they should be disentangled from this issue, as any monetary or community program inducement would be seen as a bribe to ensure support for a nuclear waste facility. Indigenous people should be provided with all the community services they require, without tying them to this proposal.

e) Whether wider Eyre Peninsular or state-wide community view should be taken into consideration and, if so, how this is occurring or should be occurring,

As mentioned above it is imperative that such an important and long lasting project gets overall support from first the local indigenous people, then the local communities, South Australians and lastly Australians overall. All the salient facts need to be published and people invited to vote. This information should the fact that waste is currently being stored successfully on-site where it is subject to regular scrutiny. People would need to have all transport routes identified and a guarantee that this project will not escalate into high level waste from overseas being shipped and stored here.

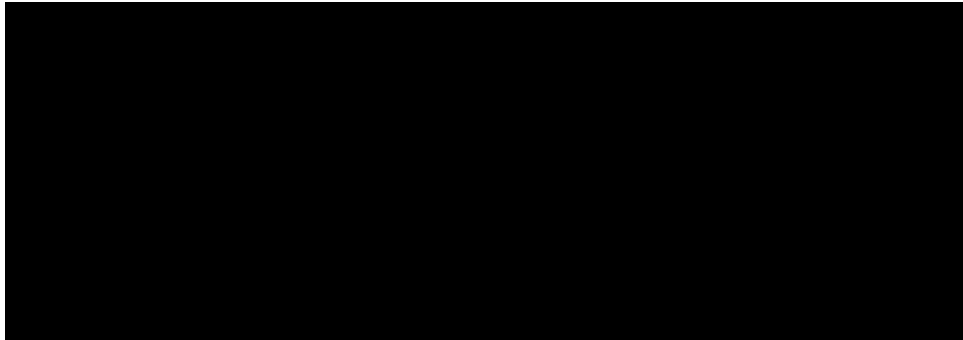
The project should only proceed if it has an overall majority vote of 90% in favour as what is proposed, once begun can not easily be undone.

f) **Any other related matters.**

As seen above there is a lot more information and project management work to be drawn up before this proposal should be taken any further. At the moment it seems in the “wish list” category but serious information and planning needs to occur before this proposal can be taken further. The first matter to be solved being the right of the Australian government to override the SA legislation which opposes any nuclear waste facility here. We would appreciate your response on this matter.

We thank you for the opportunity to put our views forward on this very important matter.

Yours Sincerely,



Stephen Darley – Co-ordinator, IPAN (SA)