

Dear Committee Secretary

The Australian Uranium Association supports the establishment of a fit-for-purpose radioactive waste management facility for Australian-generated low-level and intermediate level radioactive waste, that is, waste generated by activities in Australia conducted by the Commonwealth and its agencies, by the States and Territories and their agencies and by Australian industries.

Our primary view is that a suitable legislative framework and an orderly legislative process are needed to meet that objective.

The existence of low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste generated in Australia is a fact. Currently, there is no facility in which that waste can be stored on a long term basis. The search for such a facility has been a longstanding one which, in our view, should be brought to a conclusion as soon as possible, consistent with the best scientific advice about the technology required and its construction, community consultation and the timetable that requires Australia to store domestically the intermediate-level waste from the nuclear research reactor at Lucas Heights, currently due for return to Australia by 2011 or 2012.

Whatever the merits of the existing legislation, its repeal would leave Australia with no orderly basis for establishing a waste management facility and with uncertainty about the future legislative basis for such a facility.

In our view, a better course than repealing the existing legislation would be either to amend it where it is believed to be deficient or to enact new legislation that comes into force simultaneously with the repeal of the current Act.

Yours sincerely

Michael Angwin
Executive Director
Australian Uranium Association