

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd
PO Box 6022,
House of Representatives, Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600
Tel: (02) 6277 7700 Fax: (02) 6273 4100

June 11, 2008

Re: Radioactive Waste Management Election Commitments

To Prime Minister Kevin Rudd

Cc: Minister Martin Ferguson, Minister Jenny Macklin, Minister Warren Snowdon, Senator Trish Crossin

Dear Prime Minister,

Before the federal election there was a clear commitment that a Labor government would repeal the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act (CRWMA 2005/06). Almost 200 days since the election, this promise has not been publicly reiterated and there is grave concern from the undersigned organisations that your government is considering rescinding this promise.

Labor voted against the 2005 legislation and the 2006 amendments, with Labor MPs describing the legislation as 'extreme', 'arrogant', 'heavy-handed', 'draconian', 'sorry', 'sordid', 'extraordinary' and 'profoundly shameful'. A number of Labor MPs unequivocally committed a Labor government to repeal of the legislation.

Given this clear commitment, why has the government not yet announced repeal of the Act?

Many affected people, Members of the Northern Territory Government, Territory organisations and national environment groups have made numerous requests to you and Minister Ferguson to clarify when the commitment to repeal this draconian and undemocratic law will be acted upon.

Minister Ferguson has not been forthcoming or transparent in his response to these requests and is out of step with promises of a process which is "*scientific, transparent, accountable, fair and allows access to appeal mechanisms*" and to "*ensure full community consultation in radioactive waste decision-making processes*" (ALP Platform, Chapter 5).

The undersigned groups call for you to immediately announce a repeal date for the CRWMA and notify all affected Traditional Owners, communities and stakeholder organisations.

National ALP Platform states the Federal Labor Government will "*not proceed with the development of any of the current sites identified by the Howard Government in the Northern Territory, if no contracts have been entered into for those sites.*" (ALP Platform, Chapter 5).

Given that no contracts have been entered into beyond the assessment phase, we ask you to confirm that processes related to the four sites currently being studied will cease when the assessment report is

finalised. This includes the three nominated Department of Defence sites (Mt Everard, Harts Range and Fishers Ridge) and Muckaty, which was nominated by the Northern Land Council using extraordinary provisions of the CRWMA 2006.

We ask you to implement the resolution passed at the April 2008 NT Labor Conference: *"Conference understands the nomination of Muckaty as a potential radioactive dump site, made under the CRWMA legislation, was not made with the full and informed consent of all Traditional Owners and affected people and as such does not comply with the Aboriginal Land Rights Act (ALRA). Conference calls for the Muckaty nomination to also be repealed when the CRWMA legislation is overturned."*

In respect of Northern Territory law and in recognition of strong and sustained opposition from the Northern Territory Government and communities throughout the NT, we ask you not to pursue any sites in the Territory to host a federal radioactive waste dump.

We further ask that the federal budget allocation of \$3.8 million over the next two years for radioactive waste management be used for a national study of waste management options, a study which is in line with Labor's platform commitments to handle this contentious issue in a manner which is scientific, transparent, accountable, and fair.

Prime Minister, there is no more time to waste.

Sincerely:

1. Beyond Nuclear Initiative – Natalie Wasley, uranium project coordinator
2. Friends of the Earth Australia – Dr Jim Green, national nuclear campaigner
3. The Wilderness Society – Alec Marr, Executive Director
4. Greenpeace Australia Pacific – Steve Campbell, campaign director
5. Top End Aboriginal Conservation Alliance – Donna Jackson, convenor
6. Medical Association for the Prevention of War – Dr Sue Wareham, OAM, President, MAPW (Australia); Dr Hilary Tyler (NT Branch)
7. Australian Student Environment Network
8. Environment Centre of the Northern Territory – Charles Roche, coordinator
9. Anti Nuclear Alliance of Western Australia – Jo Vallentine, convenor
10. Arid Lands Environment Centre – Jimmy Cocking, coordinator
11. Public Health Association – Michael Moore, Chief Executive Officer

Contact:

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