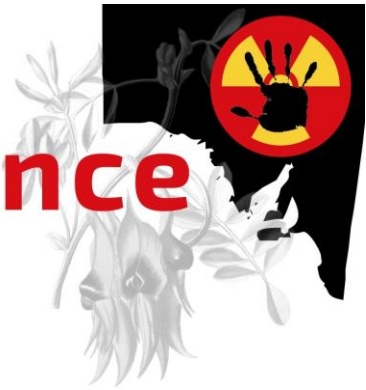


No Dump Alliance

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Regional communities unite against federal radioactive waste plan

On Tuesday April 17, 2018 representatives of South Australian regional communities being targeted by a national radioactive waste facility met at the Standpipe Hotel in Port Augusta.

No nuclear waste dump groups from the Flinders Ranges and Kimba came together in response to the recent announcement by federal Minister Matt Canavan that a community vote for a planned waste dump and store would begin on August 20th. The groups committed to increase their efforts against Canberra's plan including through an open debate featuring the federal Department, ANSTO, Traditional Owners and public policy and health professionals.

Aunty Heather Stuart and Lavene Ngatokorua, both Adnyamathanha women from the Flinders Ranges talked about long standing concerns over the impacts of the nuclear industry and the proposed nuclear waste dump at Barndioota and the strong level of opposition among many Traditional Owners.

Meeting attendees include Adnyamathanha community members, representatives from Kimba, Hawker, Whyalla and Quorn along with members of the Flinders Local Action Group and No Radioactive Waste on Agricultural Land in Kimba or SA.

Shared concerns included:

The continuing pressure on Traditional Owners and Aboriginal people given that the threat to cultural heritage sites is causing immense stress and pressure.

Inadequate consultation and information in relation to cultural heritage surveys and studies.

Current state legislation that is in place to protect the people of South Australia that prohibits such a facility can be overridden by the federal government.

In both Kimba and the Flinders Ranges there is significant community division and stress on the issue. It is not appropriate that regional areas are being targeted with a national burden.

There is no clarity or detail about the approach to manage the long lived intermediate level waste (ILW). This is Australia's most hazardous radioactive waste and the federal government has shirked repeated community calls for increased clarity.

A lack of detail around potential transport routes, emergency response capacity, risk assessment and the volumes and nature of the radioactive waste.

An incorrect linkage between access to nuclear medicine and the planned waste facility.

The capital contribution fund is not community controlled and lacks clarity.

Minister Canavan has called a community vote ahead of and without adequate regard for recommendations which may arise from the current Senate inquiry which is still evaluating submissions and will not report to parliament until mid-August.

No clarity from the Federal Minister about definitions of what constitutes 'broad community support' despite repeated community requests.

Many questions are still unanswered and there is a lack of project detail.

"This flawed federal process is failing our communities", said Peter Woolford from Kimba. "Minister Canavan is fast-tracking a plan that does not have broad community support".

Greg Bannon from the Flinders Local Action Group criticised the lack of genuine community engagement and the rapid turnover of project staff. "We are given assurances and promises and then that person and the commitments disappear, and the goalposts move".

The groups committed to highlight community concern and opposition to the federal plan ahead of the August vote and urged residents in the wider region to stand up and speak out. The regional groups will continue to work with state and national environment groups, trade unions and wider civil society groups and will actively build links with the broad range of South Australians who have expressed opposition and concern over radioactive waste issues in recent years.

Barry Wakelin was the federal member for Grey for fifteen years and has closely tracked the federal government's approach to radioactive waste. A former supporter of earlier plans Barry is now calling for a revised approach. "This is a national issue, not something that a regional community should be left to deal with. The current federal plan lacks evidence and poses a threat to our existing industries – we need a better way. This has been a productive meeting and it is heartening to see regional South Australians stepping up to the challenge, taking action and working together".

For media comment please get in touch with:

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