

**POLITICS AHEAD OF HEALTH:  
CONTRADICTION BETWEEN LABOR NUCLEAR WASTE PLAN AND INDIGENOUS HEALTH POLICY**  
*Decision to proceed with Muckaty Station Nuclear Waste Dump based on ideology not science*

The Public Health Association of Australia today expressed its disappointment at the Commonwealth Government's announcement to proceed with attempting to locate a national nuclear waste dump on Muckaty Station a remote Aboriginal owned station in the Northern Territory.

"The decision to push ahead with a proposed nuclear waste dump on Muckaty Station in the Northern Territory goes against good health and environmental policy", said PHAA environmental health spokesperson and NT Branch Secretary Clive Rosewarne.

"The ALP has produced an unsatisfactory outcome for all Northern Territorians but most especially those traditional owners of Muckaty station that have for the last 5 years expressed their opposition to having the facility placed on their land".

"This decision defies the logic of best practice in radioactive waste management and is an abrogation of a clear promise by the ALP prior to the last election".

There is no scientific imperative to force this dump on any NT community. The Bureau of Resource Sciences identified a region in SA, even the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation has stated that its waste could be stored on site at Lucas Heights. Therefore there is no need then to have a waste dump unless there is an intention to import waste from overseas. This is a political decision.

The Public Health Association in submissions to both the Howard and Rudd governments and in public evidence to a Senate inquiry called for the Commonwealth government not to proceed with attempting to force a nuclear waste dump on the Northern Territory.

In 2008 the Public Health Association, in a joint letter to the Prime Minister asked the Government to honour its pre-election commitment to repeal the Howard government's Radioactive Waste Management Act. Today's announcement by Minister Ferguson does not honour that promise, but rather attempts to wriggle out of it, by repealing one piece of legislation with another version focused solely on one community. This new proposal is slap in the face to all Territorians and most particularly Aboriginal Territorians with legitimate concerns for their community's health.

"While the transportation and storage of radioactive waste pose a potential health threat, the experience of marginalisation and disempowerment felt by Aboriginal people because of the government's approach may contribute to negative health outcomes that are stress related".

"This process has placed Aboriginal people under incredible stress. Today's announcement greatly increases that stress and sends a message to Aboriginal Australia that the nuclear industry in this country comes first. The Rudd government's credibility on Aboriginal health and its commitment to closing the health gap must be questioned when on an issues with obvious health consequences they ride rough shod over clearly expressed local community opposition", said Mr Rosewarne.

**For further comment contact:** Clive Rosewarne 08 89535703.