

Four years too long: Time to dump the dump

National environment and public health groups have urged the federal government to honour a long standing Labor party promise and scrap laws and plans to impose a federal radioactive waste dump on the Northern Territory.

Today is the fourth anniversary of the Howard government's announcement that it would impose a federal dump, a move that continues to be deeply unpopular across the Northern Territory.

The NT plan remains active despite a clear 2007 election promise that Labor would repeal the controversial Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act (CRWMA) and base its policy on best science, transparent process and community consultation.

"For 48 months the Territory community and Government have actively opposed moves to impose a federal dump," said Beyond Nuclear Initiative spokesperson Natalie Wasley.

"We have also waited for 20 months for the Rudd government to honour its party platform and the clear promise it gave on radioactive waste management".

"We are running out of patience and Labor has run out of excuses for its inaction".

There is growing dissatisfaction nationally over Resource Minister Martin Ferguson's handling of the issue.

"Minister Ferguson has failed his nuclear test," said Ms Wasley. "He has failed to engage the community, failed to win stakeholder confidence and failed to implement federal Labor's clear policy position. National environment and health groups are calling on Federal Labor to take immediate action on this issue."

"We call on Prime Minister Rudd to ensure that Labor finally abandons the former Howard government's approach and instead develops a credible and open approach to radioactive waste management".

In opposition federal Labor voted against the CRWMA describing the law as 'extreme, arrogant, heavy-handed, draconian, sordid and profoundly shameful'.

"Labor should use this anniversary to draw a line under past approaches and to outline a new way forward on radioactive waste management," said Dr Jim Green, national nuclear campaigner with Friends of the Earth.

"Imposing toxic facilities and refusing to engage with key stakeholders and affected communities is neither honest nor responsible and will not be accepted or effective," concluded Dr Green.

Further information and comment: Natalie Wasley 0429 900 774 / Dr Jim Green 0417 318 368

List of groups supporting the call for action on the dump:

- 1-Beyond Nuclear Initiative
- 2-Friends of the Earth Australia
- 3-Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)
- 4-Public Health Association Australia

