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Mr Ian Thackeray
Committee Manager
Joint Select Committee on the Transport and Storage of Nuclear Waste
Parliament House
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SYDNEY NSW 2000



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Dear Mr Thackeray

RE: Parliamentary Inquiry into the Transportation and Storage of Nuclear Waste

Leichhardt Council welcomes the Inquiry into the transportation and storage of nuclear waste and thanks the Joint Select Committee for the opportunity to provide this submission.

Council is strongly opposed to the transportation of nuclear waste through local communities and supports the objections that have been expressed by the community, other local councils and some non-government agencies. In particular:

- **The transportation of nuclear waste further increases the risk of radioactive contamination.**

The nuclear waste will be transported through key agricultural regions and across major river systems. An accident would have consequences not just for the local communities along the route, but the entire state.

The Commonwealth Government needs to fully consider the appropriateness of the types of containers to be used to transport the waste, the inspection procedures, provisions for preventing theft or sabotage of the waste and the provision of adequate training for those handling the waste.

Of particular concern is the lack of information regarding risk management, incident response and the impacts of potential incidents. The Commonwealth needs to ensure that adequate incident response systems are in place and that emergency services are well informed and prepared to respond in the event of an incident.

The community needs to be clearly informed about planned transport movements and arrangements and be made fully aware of their public safety and environment protection implications.

- **Storage demands for nuclear waste can be reduced by minimising waste generation.**

The Commonwealth has not addressed the clear need for waste minimisation. Most of the waste generated (and thus needing to be transported and stored) will be generated by the new Lucas Heights reactor. Without a new reactor there would be no pressure for a storage facility and the transportation of radioactive waste through communities. Council has in the past, and continues to, oppose the construction of any new nuclear reactors in Australia given their associated risks and waste problems.

The beneficial medical effects of the use of isotopes should not be used as a justification for a reactor. Safer and less hazardous alternative technologies exist that would minimise further production of nuclear waste (such as cyclotron and accelerator technologies). The Commonwealth should be supporting the development of these alternative technologies and actively reducing the amount of nuclear waste produced in Australia.

- **There are alternatives to the burial of radioactive waste**

Council does not support the burial of radioactive waste, which remains toxic for many hundreds of thousands of years. The safety of any burial site cannot be guaranteed for that length of time. The Commonwealth's plan to bury existing and future nuclear waste lacks a clear rationale and will create a greater radioactive burden for future generations.

Radioactive waste should be kept in dry, above ground storage, close to experts so it can be monitored. This approach is increasingly used overseas. Immediate attention needs to be given to improving the management and storage of existing waste at the Lucas Heights reactor before the Commonwealth pursues plans to generate and transport additional waste.

In summary, Council has serious concerns about the potential environmental and health impacts of transporting nuclear waste through NSW communities and storing it below ground. The Commonwealth's plan is not an acceptable or effective way to address Australia's radioactive waste problem and places an unnecessary burden on the people of NSW. Council urges the Joint Select Committee to reflect the concerns of the community and reject any plans for the imposed creation, transport and dumping of radioactive waste on unwilling communities.

Yours sincerely



Jeff Thompson

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