



## WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL

### SUBMISSION TO THE NSW JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE OF NUCLEAR WASTE.

Council expresses its surprise and concern that the proposal to create a national nuclear waste repository includes a proposal albeit an alternative route, to transport nuclear waste by road through our City. The Documentation available suggests that the material will be transported by road and that the option two route is down the Hume Highway to the junction with the Sturt Highway and then along the Sturt Highway to the South Australian border. However it fails to mention that the Sturt Highway runs through the centre of the built-up urban area of the City of Wagga Wagga, or that the Murrumbidgee valley and associated irrigation areas form an extremely important part of the nations food production system.

Council would wish to:

- **Suggest that rail is a more appropriate means of transporting material of this nature.**

Use of road transport introduces a number of additional risks and lowers the transport security. It introduces all of the various issues associated with transport on trucks along a public highway: individual drivers, interaction with other traffic, route selection, increased potential for highjacking, etc. all adding to the inherent risks associated with the transport of nuclear waste across the country. On the other hand, use of rail transport while still of concern, lowers, or even in some cases eliminates most of these risks and is seen as the proper mechanism for the transportation of materials like nuclear wastes.

- **Protest at the suggestion that radioactive waste could be transported through the urban area of the City of Wagga Wagga and surrounding areas.**

It is noted that the recent NRMA survey of the Sturt Highway identified the eleven intersections with the worst accident records on the Sturt Highway are in built-up sections of the City of Wagga Wagga with many thousands of City residents living within a few hundred metres of these intersections.

- **Suggest that the use of the Hume - Sturt Highways Route is inappropriate.**

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The route uses Australia's busiest transportation corridor and passes through, or very close to a number of major and lesser urban centres and the heart of Riverina food basin. The nature of the waste is such that it would be appropriate to minimise exposure to high intensity traffic and population centres. The area through which it is proposed to transport the waste is responsible for the production of a very significant proportion of the state and indeed the nations food supply and significant export earnings. The nature of Australia's export industry is such, that any hint of a contamination incident could jeopardise this income and the regions clean food status.

- **Suggest that if the Hume - Sturt Highway Route is to be followed then the risk of accidents needs to be reduced with additional Government funding being made available for dealing with accident blackspots and generally improving the road transport routes.**

As mentioned above, there are a number of locations, particularly in Wagga Wagga, where road safety needs to be improved if nuclear wastes are to be transported through the region.

- **Demand assurances that any material being transported through our area be transported in containers designed to guarantee their integrity in the event of the most severe road accident and/or fire.**

In all but a very small section of the Hume - Sturt Highway routes, through the City, volunteer bush fire fighters would be the first response units on the scene of any accident. It is considered that the potential of nuclear products being involved makes this totally unreasonable unless the volunteers are able to be assured that there is absolutely no chance of the material escaping in any sort of accident.

## CITY OF WAGGA WAGGA

MAYORAL MINUTE submitted to the COUNCIL MEETING on 28 JULY 2003 at 7:00 PM

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Councillors, Ladies & Gentlemen

### **1 NATIONAL RADIOACTIVE WASTE REPOSITORY PROPOSAL - POTENTIAL TRANSPORT OF RADIOACTIVE MATERIAL THROUGH THE CITY**

#### **Recommendation**

- a That the advice regarding the Commonwealth Government's proposal to establish a Nuclear Waste Repository, including a proposal for the wastes be transported along the Hume and Sturt Highways through the City of Wagga Wagga, be received and noted.**
- b That the General Manager's action in preparing and lodging a draft submission to the NSW Joint Select Committee on the transportation and storage of nuclear waste be confirmed.**
- c That the local Member be advised of the submission and his support be sought in protesting at the suggestion that wastes be transported through built-up areas of the City and surrounding rural areas**

#### **Report**

Council has been contacted by both the Paramilitary Committee Manager and Local Member, Daryl Maguire MP, with advice that the Parliament of NSW has set up a Joint Select Committee on the transportation and storage of nuclear waste.

As part of the proposal to develop a national radioactive waste repository, a number of potential road transportation routes through NSW have been identified. One of these, labelled Option 2, seeks to use the Hume Highway from Sydney to the Sturt Highway junction and then the Sturt Highway to the South Australian border. The Joint Select Committee on the transportation and storage of nuclear waste has been set up to look at logistical arrangements, health and safety risks and other relevant matters.

The Commonwealth proposal has been the subject of an exhaustive environmental assessment process, however at least some members of the community, will be unhappy to see radioactive wastes being transported through our area and will see the use of the Sturt Highway through parts of the built-up area of Wagga Wagga City and the intense farming land of the Murrumbidgee valley as being totally inappropriate.

It is suggested that Council ought to be making a submission along the following lines:

- Protesting at the suggestion that radioactive waste could be transported through the city and surrounding areas.
- Suggesting that the use of the Hume/Sturt Route is inappropriate,

- Suggesting rail transport maybe more appropriate
- Suggesting that if the Hume/Sturt Route is followed then the risk of accident needs to be reduced with additional Government funding being made available for dealing with accident blackspots and generally improving the road transport routes.
- Demanding assurances that any material being transported through our area be transported in containers designed to guarantee their integrity in the event of the most severe road accident and/or fire.

Because the closing date for submissions was July 31 a draft submission along these lines has been submitted to the committee. A copy of the submission is annexed. Council can of course choose to withdraw that submission if it wishes.

## WAGGA WAGGA CITY COUNCIL

### SUBMISSION TO THE NSW JOINT SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE TRANSPORTATION AND STORAGE OF NUCLEAR WASTE.

#### SUBMISSION

Council expresses its surprise and concern that the proposal to create a national nuclear waste repository includes a proposal, albeit an alternative route, to transport nuclear waste through our city. The Documentation available suggests that the option two route is down the Hume Highway to the junction with the Sturt Highway and then along the Sturt Highway to the South Australian border. However it fails to mention that the Sturt Highway runs through the centre of the built-up urban area of the city of Wagga Wagga, and the Murrumbidgee Valley. The Murrumbidgee Valley and associated irrigation areas form an extremely important parts of the nations food production system.

Council would wish to:

- Protest at the suggestion that radioactive waste could be transported through the urban area of the city of Wagga Wagga and surrounding areas. It is noted that the recent NRMA survey of the Sturt Highway identified the eleven intersections with the worst accident records on the Sturt Highway are in built-up sections of the city of Wagga Wagga with many thousands of city residents living within a few hundred meters of these intersections.
- Suggest that the use of the Hume/Sturt Route is inappropriate. The route passes through, or very close to a number of major and lesser urban centres and the heart of Riverina food basin. This area is responsible for the production of a very significant proportion of the state and indeed the nations food supply and generates significant export earnings. The nature of Australia's export industry is such that any hint of a contamination incident could jeopardise this income and the regions clean food status.
- See the investigation of the use of the inherently more safe rail alternative for this transport task rather than road.
- Suggest that if the Hume/Sturt Route is to be followed, then the risk of accidents needs to be reduced with additional Government funding being made available for dealing with accident blackspots and generally improving the road transport routes. As mentioned above there are a number of locations where safety needs to be improved if nuclear wastes are to be transported through the region.
- Demand assurances that any material being transported through our area be transported in containers designed to guarantee their integrity in the event of the most severe road accident and/or fire. In all but a very small section of the Hume/Sturt Highway routes through the city, volunteer bush fire fighters would be the first response units on the scene of any accident. It is considered that the potential of nuclear products being involved makes this totally unreasonable unless the volunteers are able to be assured that there is absolutely no chance of the material escaping in any sort of accident.

