

Submission
No 5

INQUIRY INTO NANOTECHNOLOGY IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Name: Mrs Leslie McCawley

Date received: 25/03/2008

Allowing any group of human beings to create objects that are potentially lethal but cannot be seen, smelled, felt, tasted, heard or otherwise sensed and avoided by other human beings is not wise. Every human, animal, plant and sea would be utterly vulnerable. This would give the creators/owners of these items immense power over all others. Perhaps angels could be trusted with that great responsibility, but not mere mortals.

Our exquisitely calibrated and sensitive bodily defence systems (such as the kidneys, lymph nodes, skin and lungs), are designed to filter toxins of a particular scale only, and are not at all equipped to defend us against these exceedingly tiny, engineered particles. Against them we have no defences whatsoever. Nor do the defence systems of animals or plants, on land or in the oceans. Therefore it would be dreadfully irresponsible to allow nanoparticles into our biological environment.

These particles would not stop at the usual barriers of tissue, and where they may accumulate and the effects they may have are simply unknown. Will they accumulate in the lung like asbestos fibres? Or in the brain like the plaque that causes dementia? Or perhaps collect, as deposits on the blood vessel linings, like those that cause arteriosclerosis? Or create clots that will precipitate strokes? The answers to these questions are simply not known. Any use of this technology is premature, and should require ironclad proof of safety, long before turning it over to the commercial interests. Such products already in the environment should be withdrawn.

The 'wonders' of scientific progress have already given us lethal exhaust fumes and particulate matter in our air, agricultural chemicals in the food supply, a genetically-modified food supply, oil and garbage through-out our seas, space junk, nuclear uranium wastes that will not biodegrade within our species' lifetime, radiation, daily exposure to glues, resins, paints, cleansers, degreasers, pesticides, herbicides, plastics, neurotoxins, etc. We already are paying the price with higher levels of deformity, cardiovascular disease, autism, lowered IQ, the many cancers, etc; why add the unknown but possibly unlimited and exponential effects of the products of nanotechnology? We should first of all use the gifts of science wisely, to clean up every one of these gross sources of pollution, before even considering unleashing any further, more subtle ones.

It is my sincere belief that NO economic arguments or commercial pressures could or should ever justify allowing nanotechnology, as too much is at stake for all of the non-nano scale inhabitants of the earth. My family and I ask you to please say no to nanotechnology.

If nanotechnology is permitted in NSW, then at the very least requiring clear warning labels must be mandatory, so that informed consumers and workers have the means to avoid those products.

Thank you.