

Submission  
No 16

## FORMER URANIUM SMELTER SITE, HUNTER'S HILL

**Organisation:** Friends of the Earth Sydney  
**Name:** Ms Holly Creenaune  
**Date received:** 30/06/2008

---



Friends of the Earth Sydney  
19 Eve St  
Erskineville  
NSW 2043

## **Submission to NSW Legislative Council inquiry into the Former uranium smelter site, Hunter's Hill**

### **Friends of the Earth Sydney**

#### **Contact:**

Holly Creenaune  
Nuclear Campaigner  
Friends of the Earth Sydney  
T 0417682541  
E [holly.creenaune@foe.org.au](mailto:holly.creenaune@foe.org.au)

Friends of the Earth Sydney is a community-based group campaigning for local and global environmental justice. We welcome the opportunity to submit to this NSW Government inquiry.

Radioactive waste is a long-lived and serious environmental hazard. Decisions about its long-term management and storage must be widely consulted and thoroughly considered. Our responsibility toward safe management and storage is a long-term commitment. FoE Sydney is deeply concerned over the poor management of the Hunters Hill site over many decades and the potentially harmful effects of radiation for local people and the environment.

#### **Extent of contamination and radioactivity levels**

FoE Sydney support the submission of Friends of the Earth Australia in its assertion the "weight of scientific opinion holds that there is no threshold below which ionising radiation poses no risk". We dispute the claims from NSW Health, ANSTO, the Minister's spokesperson the radioactive contamination at Hunters Hill poses no risk, or that the site is 'safe'. FoE Sydney calls for ongoing, credible and thorough studies of the radiation levels at Hunters Hill.

#### **'Disposal' or management of waste from the site**

FoE Sydney believe an environmental approach to radioactive waste management would include above-ground storage, with none or minimal transport of waste, with thorough

consultation and not imposed on communities, and be subject to regular monitoring and independent audits.<sup>1</sup> We regard an environmental approach to radioactive waste management is regarded as managing waste long-term on-site. However, this may not be the best option for the management of waste at Hunters' Hill, with the proximity of residents and geography of the site. FoE Sydney support thorough consideration and exploration of potential storage at the ANSTO facility at Lucas Heights: with their existing radioactive safety facilities, practices and staff; and the proximity of the site to Hunters Hills, minimising transport distance for contaminated materials.

Whilst FoE Sydney do not have access to relevant or credible scientific data on the radioactivity levels of contaminated material on the Hunters Hill site, FoE Sydney currently do not support plans to classify contaminated material as being below regulatory limits for management as low-level radioactive waste, such as an "industrial" classification to allow contaminated material to be dumped at a tip in western Sydney.<sup>2</sup> FoE Sydney do not support the dilution of contaminated soil in order to render it below regulatory criteria for management as radioactive waste. This approach is not considered appropriate nor responsible radioactive waste management.

FoE Sydney believe the excellent report and recommendations from the 2004 NSW Parliament Inquiry into the transportation and storage of nuclear waste<sup>3</sup> could guide the outcome of this inquiry.

We are happy to be consulted further on this issue.

---

<sup>1</sup> Sweeney, David, 'Wasting the Future', Briefing paper 8, <http://energyscience.org.au/FS08%20Radioactive%20Waste.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Chesterton, Andrew, 'West's toxic dump', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 04/05/08

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/nuclearwaste>