

Media Release

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Ferguson must dump secret nuclear deal once and for all

The Beyond Nuclear Initiative (BNI) in Alice Springs has again called upon Minister Martin Ferguson to scrap the Howard government's NT dump plan and reveal Labor's intentions for domestic radioactive waste management.

The Minister traveled to Darwin yesterday to meet with the Northern Land Council, which presumably involved discussion of the Muckaty dump site nomination. Only weeks ago, the NLC organised for a small group of Muckaty Traditional Owners to travel to Canberra and meet with representatives from Ferguson's Resources and Energy Department, in a confidential meeting specifically about the dump.

These secret meetings disregard both NT and federal Labor policies on waste management.

NT ALP Conference in April this year passed a motion noting that 'the nomination of Muckaty as a potential radioactive dump site, made under the CRWMA legislation, was not made with the full and informed consent of all Traditional Owners and affected people and as such does not comply with Aboriginal Land Rights Act (ALRA). The NT ALP Conference called 'for the Muckaty nomination to also be repealed when the CRWMA legislation is overturned'.

BNI campaigner Natalie Wasley stated, "since the federal election, targeted communities, the NT Government and national environment groups have consistently requested information regarding the NT dump proposal. However, these groups, along with supporters around the country, are still waiting for a substantial, coherent answer from the Minister".

"Despite a clear ALP commitment to transparency and accountability regarding waste management, including repeal of the legislation forcing a dump on the NT, Mr Ferguson has maintained a culture of secrecy surrounding this proposal similar to that of the previous government".

"While Prime Minister Rudd has been avoiding election promises on this issue, Minister Ferguson has been meeting with the Northern Land Council to discuss advancing the Muckaty nomination. It is not acceptable that the Minister simply pick the most politically viable of the four nominated sites".

"Senior ALP politicians called Howard's waste dump legislation draconian, sordid, and shameful. The Government must act now by repealing these laws and announcing its proposal for a fair and accountable radioactive waste management process. There is no more time to waste on this important national issue", Ms Wasley concluded.

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