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## **Hawke/Giles international dump plan entrenches radioactive racism**

Less than two months after the controversial and long-running Muckaty radioactive waste dump battle was settled, with the federal government agreeing not to act on the proposal, former-PM Bob Hawke has used an appearance at the Garma festival to suggest dumping the world's nuclear waste on Aboriginal land is the only way to lift communities out of poverty.

"Mr Hawke has disingenuously put forward the idea that to end disadvantage Aboriginal communities must accept responsibility for hosting the world's worst industrial wastes. These comments are a perpetuation of the same kind of racist disregard for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal communities that allowed atomic testing to take place on Aboriginal lands in the South Australian desert, and continue to see communities subjected to the environmental and health risks of uranium mining and contamination" said Lauren Mellor, nuclear-free campaigner with the Environment Centre NT.

"It is little wonder that Hawke's efforts at a treaty with Aboriginal Australia failed when the best plan he can envisage for lifting communities out of poverty is to offer a toxic trade-off for access to basic services that all other citizens enjoy. This really demonstrates how bereft of responsible policy ideas some politicians are, both in regards to tackling Aboriginal disadvantage and dealing responsibly with the nation's growing radioactive waste problem."

Beyond Nuclear Initiative convenor Natalie Wasley added, "It is clear from Mr Hawke's comments that NT Chief Minister Adam Giles learned nothing from the eight year campaign by Muckaty Traditional Owners to keep their country free of nuclear waste. If he has been secretly canvassing locations to dump the world's nuclear waste in the Territory he should make this position public and be judged on it by Territorians, who are overwhelming against the idea of hosting a nuclear dump."

"There is no easy fix to both the complex issue of Aboriginal structural and economic disadvantage and dealing with the nation's nuclear waste problem. If Hawke and Giles want to show true leadership on these issues they can start by backing calls made by Australia's peak environment, public health and trade union groups to establish a radioactive waste management commission to examine the most scientifically credible and fair ways of managing nuclear waste into the future," Ms Wasley concluded.

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