



MEDIA RELEASE

Friday 4 December 2015

Community and unions gather to protest arrival of nuclear shipment

Radioactive waste will be on the community's radar on Saturday as trade unionists, environmentalists and local residents gather at Port Kembla to protest and monitor the first shipment of Australian radioactive waste returning from reprocessing in France.

After being unloaded the waste will be transported for storage in a new purpose built facility at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation's Lucas Heights reactor site.

"Our members do not support the nuclear industry," said Maritime Union of Australia's Southern NSW Branch Secretary Garry Keane. "There is no totally safe way to transport or store waste which remains a danger and threatens communities for thousands of years."

"Understandably no one else wants our nuclear waste - that is why it is coming back to Lucas Heights and we want to send a clear message that we won't accept anyone else's nuclear waste."

The shipment comes as the federal government explores options for a national radioactive waste dump at one of six regional and remote sites across Australia. Civil society groups are calling for the waste to continue to be stored at Lucas Heights pending an expert and open examination of all future management options.

"Extended interim storage at Lucas Heights is the 'least worst' of the current waste management options," said Australian Conservation Foundation campaigner Dave Sweeney.

"If this material can be made at there then it can be stored there until a full review takes place. ANSTO has a secured and actively managed facility with the highest concentration of nuclear expertise and response capacity in Australia."

The groups organising the community presence at Port Kembla have been active in sustained and successful campaigns with NT Traditional Owners opposing a planned national radioactive waste dump on their lands.

"The federal government's current plan to transport this waste to one of six short-listed sites is contested and unnecessary," said Beyond Nuclear Initiative coordinator Natalie Wasley.

"Communities at all of the proposed locations have already expressed concern and opposition to this plan. There is no need to rush and Minister Frydenberg should use this time to initiate a public and independent review of both waste production and responsible management options."

French political and environment groups, Greenpeace and the Maritime Union of Australia have all raised significant concerns over safety and capacity of the *BBC Shanghai*, the ship carrying the waste returning from France, and the nature of the waste.

“When a shipment of solar panels comes through the port you don’t see hundreds of cops blocking highways and a national security operation,” said Arthur Rorris from the South Coast Labour Council.

“Communities the world over want to see the back of the nuclear industry so we don’t have to endure these unnecessary risks to public health, the environment and our national security.”

Further information and comment:

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What: Community gathering at Port Kembla to protest nuclear waste shipment

When: 1pm Saturday 5th December

Where: Corner of Bridge Street and Springhill Road, Coniston

Facebook: [Don't nuclear waste Australia: community gathering to witness waste shipment](#)