

Public Submission 4 – Sutherland Shire Council

**MM022-21 MAYORAL MINUTE - ARPANSA NOTICE OF INTENTION TO MAKE A
DECISION ON A FACILITY LICENCE APPLICATION TO ANSTO**

MM022-21

Attachments: Nil

I am deeply concerned that ANSTO has recently applied for a licence to construct an "Intermediate Level Waste Capacity Increase (ILWCI) Facility" on their Lucas Heights campus.

This Minute is not intended to take away from the good work that ANSTO does; it is to again raise the issue of the failure of successive governments to address the need for a national repository for radioactive waste.

ANSTO plays an important role in our community and in our nation; it is a facility providing almost all of Australia's nuclear medicine. The site employs highly skilled people and is responsible for ground breaking research. I applaud its innovation and the employment it brings to our local government area.

Council has a long history of opposing the Lucas Heights site being used as the de facto repository for Australia's nuclear waste. In 1991 Council successfully challenged the transfer and storage of nuclear waste from a CSIRO facility at Fisherman's Bend, Victoria to the ANSTO facility at Lucas Heights. This action highlighted the need for the development of a suitable national repository to accept these wastes. Repeated Parliamentary and Senate Inquiries since this time have again highlighted the need for such a facility to deal with Australia's growing nuclear waste issues.

In granting an approval for the OPAL reactor, the ARPANSA CEO in 2005 identified the need for a National Repository to manage radioactive waste associated with the new facility. At that time the Commonwealth Radioactive Waste Management Act, had just been passed into law. Also, in the Environmental Assessment Report for the OPAL reactor the Department of Environment and Heritage's assessment concluded:

".....there are no environmental reasons, including on safety, health, hazard or risk grounds, to prevent construction of the proposed reactor at Lucas Heights. This conclusion is subject to implementation of the recommendations below."

Recommendation 26 and 27 regarding Nuclear Waste states:

"26. Reactor construction should not be authorised until arrangements for the management of spent fuel rods from the replacement reactor have been demonstrated to the satisfaction of ARPANSA and the Minister for the Environment and Heritage.

27. The Industry, Science and Resources and Health Portfolios should give timely consideration to strategies for the long term and eventual permanent disposal of Australia's long-term intermediate –level nuclear wastes, and associated issues."

Despite this, over 15 years later we are still awaiting this facility. Successive governments have failed this community.

The lack of a National Radioactive Waste Repository has prompted ANSTO to request approval to construct an Intermediate Level Waste Capacity Increase (ILWCI) Facility. In order to ensure ongoing radiopharmaceutical production, there is the requirement for ANSTO to have a suitable storage facility for radioactive wastes. ANSTO's current projections show that the existing storage facilities will reach capacity from 2027 for certain waste streams. Therefore, ANSTO considers that an additional facility is required to ensure that it is able to safely store and manage all radioactive wastes produced on site until a time where it is able to be transported to the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility (NRWMF) for interim storage.

While the safety assessment accompanying the application concludes that it is very unlikely accident scenarios will result in potential for spread of radioactivity to the surrounding areas, ANSTO is not a suitable site for a radioactive waste storage facility. Such sites need to be located in environmentally suitable locations, including sites that are geologically stable and isolated from major population centres.

Council calls on the federal government to urgently address this unacceptable situation and progress the development of a National Radioactive Waste Management Facility. More than twenty years of inaction must end now to ensure the ongoing safety of our community.

MOTION

THAT:

1. Council note its continued support for the research and innovation at ANSTO and its benefits for treatments for cancer and in nuclear medicine.
2. A submission be made to ARPANSA opposing the construction of an Intermediate Level Waste Capacity Increase (ILWCI) Facility at the Lucas Heights campus.
3. Council write to the Federal Minister for Resources and Water, the Hon Keith Pitt MP, requesting that matter of the establishment of a National Radioactive Waste Management Facility be given urgent priority.
4. Council puts in the strongest terms that the Member of Hughes, Mr Craig Kelly MP, should make opposing the granting of the facility licence at Lucas Heights his highest priority and take all measures to ensure that a suitable, alternate location is found.

Steve Simpson

Councillor Steve Simpson

Mayor

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