CANBERRA MUST USE SCIENCE IN DUMP PROCESS

Chief Minister Clare Martin will fly to Canberra today to outline the Territory’s opposition to the process adopted by the Federal Government in trying to establish a nuclear waste dump in the NT.

Ms Martin will appear before the Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education Legislative Committee tomorrow to argue that the Federal Government did not follow due scientific process when it nominated three sites in the Territory as potential locations for a national nuclear waste dump.

“Canberra needs to use science, not politics, to select a site for a national nuclear waste dump,” Ms Martin said.

“If they applied science instead of politics we would not be facing the prospect of a waste dump in the Territory.

“We are not opposed to a national nuclear waste dump. But the Federal Government abandoned the proper process of rigorous scientific assessment when it identified defence land at Fisher’s Ridge, Mt Everard and Hart’s Range as possible sites for the national waste dump.

“In naming the three Territory sites the Commonwealth scrapped science in favour of political expediency.

“But with construction of a waste dump not due to start until 2009 the Commonwealth still has time to revert to science rather than continuing to use politics as the basis for selecting an appropriate site.

“The Commonwealth has to go back to using the normal channels for a project of this nature rather continuing to wield the big political stick.

“Given the significance and obvious sensitivity of this project the Commonwealth has to allow for a normal process of review and scrutiny in the interests of transparency and community support. There has been no science applied to the nomination of the three Territory sites.

“Storing long-lasting toxic waste in a sensitive and fragile environment with ground-water issues is contrary to sound scientific management. Not only has it got the potential to cause environmental harm but it could also damage the Territory’s image,” Ms Martin said.

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