

Napandee Nuclear Store site nomination also targets Whyalla Port:

Nuclear Brief (Feb 2020) by David Noonan, *Independent Environment Campaigner*

Amidst rising controversy, a Federal Minister has nominated Napandee near Kimba on Eyre Peninsula as a Nuclear Store to take reactor fuel wastes and long-lived wastes from Lucas Heights.

The "[Site Characterisation Technical Report: Napandee](#)" (DIIS, July 2018, *Proximity to ports* p.150) named Whyalla Port to take shipments of nuclear fuel wastes, in the event Napandee is named as a Nuclear Store. Two shipments of reprocessed nuclear fuel wastes, in 130 tonne TN-81 casks, are intended within the first two years of operations of a Nuclear Waste Store at Napandee (p.152).

Some 100 x B-double 50 tonne loads of Intermediate Level Wastes (ILW) are also intended in the first four years of Nuclear Store operations at Napandee (p.152). The Report (p.157-158) states:

"It may be possible to have these containers shipped from Port Kembla to ports such as Whyalla"

However, the Federal government has conspicuously failed to consult the SA community on plans to impose multiple shipments of nuclear waste across SA, including potentially through Whyalla Port.

This flawed practice is in continued breach of [advice of the Nuclear Safety Committee](#) (NSC) to the nuclear regulator ARPANSA (Nov 2016) on the NRWMF, on *transparency in decisions*, stating:

"The ongoing requirement to clearly and effectively engage all stakeholders, including those along transport routes." With the NSC stating that: *"Such engagement is essential..."*

Eyre Peninsula, Whyalla and transport route communities have so far been denied a say on these Federal nuclear waste plans and now face potential serious reputational risks and material impacts.

The [Australian Radioactive Waste Management Framework](#) (DIIS, April 2018, p.4) reports total Intermediate Level Wastes at 1,770 m³ - with 95% (by volume) arising as Federal government wastes.

The Federal gov. plans to more than double Intermediate Level Wastes to produce a further 1,960 m³ over next 40 years, with 1,850 m³ (95%) of that arising from ANSTO Lucas Heights operations.

All these nuclear wastes are intended to go to Napandee for up to 100 years above ground storage.

[Proposed indefinite above ground storage](#) of nuclear fuel wastes at Napandee may compromise safety and security in SA and contravenes Nuclear Safety Committee advice. [The NSC has stated](#) dual handling in transport associated with interim storage *"does not represent international best practice"* and raises *"implications for security"*. These federal nuclear plans are also *illegal* in SA.

The previous SA State Liberal government *prohibited* the import, transport, storage and disposal of nuclear fuel wastes and reprocessed wastes under the *Nuclear Waste Storage (Prohibition) Act 2000*.

"The Objects of this Act are to protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of South Australia and to protect the environment in which they live by prohibiting the establishment of certain nuclear waste storage facilities in this State."

ARPANSA states these nuclear wastes require isolation from the environment for 10 000 years.

Nuclear waste can pose serious Safety, Accident and Security Risks:

“In the event of a major nuclear accident, adverse impacts on the tourism, agriculture and property sectors could potentially be profound.”

SA Nuclear Royal Commission: *Tentative Findings, Risks and Challenges, [Impacts on other Sectors](#)* (Feb 2016, p.28)

Key questions on safety and security in nuclear fuel waste transport and storage remain unanswered (see [D Noonan submission to Minister Canavan](#), p.11-12). These wastes must not be allowed into SA.

The UK Nuclear Free Local Authorities “[Briefing: Nuclear security concerns – how secure is the UK civil nuclear sector?](#)” (NFLA, May 2016) highlights key security threats including the risks from potential malicious attack on a nuclear waste transport or on a nuclear waste storage site.

NFLA (p.8) cites the views of nuclear engineer Dr John Large on safety as at the heart of its concerns:

“Movement of nuclear materials is inherently risky both in terms of severe accident and terrorist attack. Not all accident scenarios and accident severities can be foreseen; it is only possible to maintain a limited security cordon around the flask and its consignment; ... terrorists are able to seek out and exploit vulnerabilities in the transport arrangements and localities on the route; and emergency planning is difficult to maintain over the entire route.”

NFLA Recommendations (p.15) call for real discussion on the aftermath of a nuclear security incident given the major emergency response issues that arise. That belated debate is yet to be heard in SA.

SA is arguable unprepared for the consequences of nuclear fuel waste accidents or security events.

[Hundreds of Police were required for security](#) at a 2018 nuclear waste shipment [out of Port Kembla](#).

Whyalla is targeted for nuclear waste shipments and should have a right to refuse untenable plans.

In “[Nuclear port potential](#)” (Whyalla News, 3rd August 2018, p.1) the Mayor said Federal gov. plans to use Whyalla’s port for nuclear waste: “*would require significant community consultation*”, noting:

“In the past Whyalla has opposed any nuclear or radioactive shipping in this region”.

DIIS’s Napandee Site Characterisation Report refers to potential “*occurrences of complete shutdown*” (p.154) in Iron Triangle Cities during nuclear waste shipments. This is unacceptable.

These are fundamentally State issues and the SA public have not given consent to proposed nuclear waste transport and storage. Under the leadership of Premier Steven Marshall the SA State Liberal government has a responsibility to protect the public interest and to uphold the law in our State.

The Marshall gov. must protect all SA regional communities and reject a Nuclear Waste Store in SA.

For further information, see: <https://nuclear.foe.org.au/waste>