

MEDIA RELEASE

No Medical Justification for Nuclear Dump

“‘Rocks in the head’ is not an argument for anything. To stop further misleading health claims, the medical facts of the case need to be made clear to all Territorians,” commented Dr Peter Tait of the Medical Association for Prevention of War Australia (MAPW) in response to Senator Scullion’s new comments about the need for a nuclear waste facility on health grounds.

The proposed new dump is a requirement for the operating licence for a new \$350 million nuclear reactor at Lucas Heights in Sydney. Australia’s current Hifar nuclear reactor there produces radioactive isotopes for use in nuclear medicine.

“Nuclear medicine is important, but the new reactor is not necessary to facilitate it. Radioisotopes can be produced by non-reactor means, such as in cyclotrons, which are 100th of the cost of a nuclear reactor, and could be located in every major hospital in Australia much more cheaply than building a reactor.

“95% of Nuclear Medicine is used for diagnostic purposes. Cutting edge technologies such as CT, MRI, PET (positron-emission tomography) and ultrasound are now decreasing our reliance on reactor based isotopes especially for brain imaging. Further development of these technologies will happen.

“Radioisotopes not able to be made in cyclotrons can be easily imported for medical use. Australia imports all its radioisotopes when the Lucas Heights reactor closes for maintenance. There has never been any problem with nuclear medicine supply for these several weeks.”

Whatever the true reason for the Government pushing for this dump, it is not to do with the better health of Australians.

“I am sure that given these facts, Senator Scullion can only be moved to vote in the best interests of his constituents as he has repeated told us he would. Come November the 10th he must vote against this nuclear dump.”

For further comment:

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