



Welcome to our first monthly newsletter

The Department's team managing the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility will now update you each month about the project to find a centralised national facility.

This regular newsletter will help publicise announcements and milestones and to answer common questions the project team has been asked as the government searches for a suitable site to dispose of Australia's low level waste, and temporarily store Australia's intermediate level waste.

So far one site at Barndioota, South Australia, has progressed to the cultural heritage and technical assessment stage while the option for other site nominations remains open.

Barndioota Consultative Committee – Nomination of Community Representatives now open

The Department of Industry, Innovation and Science is seeking nominations from interested community members to be part of the Barndioota Consultative Committee.

The purpose of the Committee will be to ensure constructive dialogue and information exchange between the Government and the Barndioota community on all aspects of the Indigenous heritage and technical assessment phase of the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility project.

The Committee will meet regularly throughout the process, and be chaired and facilitated independently from the Department.

Candidates will be selected to ensure the Committee will comprise of a broad membership to represent the interests of the community.

The guidelines for how the Committee will operate are available online at www.radioactivewaste.gov.au or hard copies can be requested by calling 13 28 46.

To nominate for the Committee, please complete the nomination form at section 3 of the Guidelines. You will be required to provide a short written statement demonstrating how to meet the criteria listed in the Guidelines.

Please note that if you have already registered your interest in joining the Committee with the project team, you are still required to submit a Nomination Form.

Nominations close 5pm on Monday, 3 October 2016.

Meet the Experts

Have a science question? The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) will be visiting Hawker and Quorn in September. ANSTO experts, accompanied by the project team, will be available at the Hawker CWA Hall on the afternoon and evening of **Friday 23 September** and throughout the day on **Saturday 24 September**.

The ANSTO experts will be available at Quorn Town Hall on **Thursday 22 September** and will set up a stall at Quorn Agricultural Show on **Sunday 25 September**.

ANSTO experts can answer questions from community members of all ages on radiation, safety and how it engages with community members surrounding its research reactor facility at Lucas Heights.

In the coming months the project team will also bring out experts from Geoscience Australia, who can talk about geological and seismic aspects of the project. Further details will be provided.

Outside of the week outlined above, the Department will maintain its presence at Foresters Hall, 72 Cradock Road, Hawker, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and at the Quorn Council Chambers on Thursdays.

People can call 13 28 46 or email radioactivewaste@industry.gov.au to book a meeting. Visit www.radioactivewaste.gov.au to find out more information about the project.

Community Benefit Programme – applications to be assessed

Up to \$2 million is being granted in 2016-17 for local projects in the areas surrounding the nominated site as part of round one of the Community Benefit Programme. Round one of the Programme closed to applications on 12 August 2016.

While open this round generated considerable interest from community members in the Barndioota region with more than 280 interactions taking place by phone, email and face-to-face.

The community will see awarded projects start to roll out in late 2016 and early 2017. Further amounts of up to \$2 million dollars for 2017-18 and 2018-19 may be available if the nomination remains under consideration or is selected as the final site for the National Radioactive Waste Management Facility.

Community Liaison Officer – a greater presence in the area

Applications have closed for the position of Community Liaison Officer, who will be based out of Hawker and Quorn and will be another point of contact for community members wanting to know more about the project.

The Officer's main responsibility will be to act as an intermediary between the communities around the potential site at Barndioota, and the Department in Canberra.

The alternative technology debate

A number of people have asked whether alternative technologies can meet our nuclear medical needs. The answer is no.

No alternative technology has demonstrated capability at supplying enough nuclear medicine to satisfy national demand, let alone international demand, at anything that approaches the reliability, quality or cost of Australia's sole nuclear research reactor at ANSTO. Reports of other countries replacing nuclear produced medicines with alternative technologies are incorrect.

As medical radiation science expert Dr Geoff Currie wrote earlier this year, demand for nuclear medicine is increasing and the reactors that produce something like 70 per cent of this medicine are ageing and scheduled to shut down in coming years.

"We need security of nuclear medicine supplies in Australia to ensure that we continue to enjoy our world-leading health and wellbeing outcomes," Dr Currie wrote.

"So does the rest of the world, which is why Australia will be producing more, not less, reactor-based medicine."

ANSTO's facility at Lucas Heights will meet the increase in demand while producing less volumes of waste than is currently the case.

Dr Currie, who is Australia's leading researcher into cyclotrons, said while accelerators were fantastic for producing PET scan medicines, they could not effectively produce the workhorse of nuclear medicine, technetium-99m, which accounts for 75-80 per cent of global nuclear medicine procedures.

"At best, currently accelerators produce lower amounts of lower quality technetium-99m, at a higher cost with less reliability," Dr Currie wrote.

"Despite this, overseas in places like Canada, governments have spent millions of dollars supporting the development of experimental cyclotron-based technologies for nuclear medicine production - and none of those technologies are producing commercial supply of a quality product.

"The security of supply of nuclear medicines is not a hypothetical problem and cannot be addressed by currently hypothetical technologies and techniques."

Dr Currie is an Associate Professor in medical radiation science at Charles Sturt University and Clinical Professor/Professor of molecular imaging at Macquarie University.

Keep the questions coming

The project team has had a consistent presence in the communities of Hawker and Quorn for several months and your questions have been welcome.

Some common questions asked recently included:

Has the government already decided to locate the facility at Wallerberdina Station?

No decision to locate the facility at Wallerberdina Station has been made. This next phase is to undertake an Indigenous heritage and technical assessment to further determine the suitability of the proposed site. The community will be fully informed before a final decision on whether to proceed is taken. Broad community support is needed for a final site to be chosen.

Will this harm our region's tourism?

Experience in Australia and around the world is that the siting of radioactive waste facilities results in no long-term negative impact on tourism or regional reputation. The Lake District in the UK attracts 16 million tourists annually and hosts numerous nuclear facilities including a low-level waste repository.

Is the intermediate level waste that returned from France last year really high level waste?

No, it is intermediate level waste. Australia uses the accepted international standard for radioactive waste. The waste that was returned from France in 2015 is intermediate level waste. This classification is in accordance with International Atomic Energy Agency standards and Australian law. Under the French domestic classification system for radioactive waste, any waste derived from spent fuel is referred to as 'high level waste'. This terminology is historical.