



## **Australian Government**

### **Department of Industry, Innovation and Science**

# **Media Release: Six voluntary sites shortlisted for National Radioactive Waste Management Facility**

*13 November 2015*

The Government has shortlisted six sites for further evaluation and public consultation for a permanent National Radioactive Waste Management Facility.

Earlier this year landholders in all states and territories were invited to voluntarily nominate land for this facility to be built to dispose of Australia's low level waste, with the capacity to store some intermediate level waste. The Government received 28 nominations from landholders across Australia.

Australia currently has the equivalent of around two Olympic-sized swimming pools of such waste, which may include laboratory items such as paper, plastic and glassware, and material used in medical treatments. More than 100 sites across the country, including hospitals and universities, are licensed to store this waste on an interim basis.

Australians benefit from the use of nuclear technology in many ways. One in two Australians will require potentially life-saving nuclear medicines, 85 per cent of which is produced at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) research reactor in New South Wales. Each week ANSTO delivers 10,000 doses of potentially lifesaving nuclear medicines to over 250 hospitals and medical practices across Australia and overseas. Further, we all benefit greatly from the application of nuclear science in research, medicine and industry.

These activities result in by-products which require long-term, responsible management. With this in mind, I welcome the commitment from landholders around the country to host this important site.

Each nominated site was subject to an objective and evidence-based assessment by the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science, with the assistance of an Independent Advisory Panel and Geoscience Australia. The Government has assessed the nominations against technical, economic, social and environment factors.

Sites have been shortlisted at locations near:

Sally's Flat - New South Wales

Hale - Northern Territory

Cortlinye - South Australia

Pinkawillinie - South Australia

Barndioota - South Australia

Oman Ama - Queensland

The Government wants to ensure that the community in and around these properties is informed and engaged in this important project. As part of this commitment, the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science will now engage in extensive consultation over the next 120 days with local stakeholders with an interest in the sites.

The outcomes and feedback of the consultation process will help inform the Government's consideration of the next phase of detailed assessment, which will involve a further shortlist of two to three sites with an expectation of a final site being identified before the end of next year.

The facility will be designed, built and operated to the highest safety and environmental standards. This will require a thorough assessment by the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency, Australia's independent radiation safety regulator, and an environmental assessment under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act*.

More information on the consultation period and site nomination process can be found at <http://www.radioactivewaste.gov.au/>.

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