

COMMISSIONER: Good morning. We reconvene on Topic 15, which is low and intermediate level waste management storage and disposal, and I welcome Mr Pat Davoren. Today our goal will be to look at examples in Finland, Spain, Belgium and Australia, about the issues of low and intermediate level waste.

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Before counsel assisting provides a context statement in relation to today's session, I want to be clear that the Commission is not, through its first or any other witness today, concerned to analyse the current unrelated process being undertaken by the Commonwealth to site a low and intermediate level waste repository in Australia.

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As the Commission has indicated since the release of its issues papers, we are not concerned with identifying specific sites or facilities, whether for waste or for any other activity, nor is the Commission concerned to provide a commentary or to analyse the currently ongoing process. This is not part of our terms of reference.

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Rather, we are concerned to identify the lessons to be drawn from past processes that have been undertaken, both in Australia and overseas, and it will use these lessons learnt in addressing the nuclear fuel cycle activities that form its terms of reference.

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Counsel?

MR JACOBI: During any activity involving the use of radioactive substances, wastes are produced which are themselves radioactive, and consequently need to be specially managed to ensure the minimisation of any risks posed to humans and the environment.

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This ultimately requires the establishment and operation of specialised facilities where these wastes may be appropriately stored and disposed of for the longer term.

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The Commission is tasked by its terms of reference to examine whether it is feasible to establish and operate waste storage facilities in South Australia. There are already numerous facilities operating and licensed under state law to manage and store low level waste, generally within the same facility where the waste is produced.

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Today's public session is principally concerned with the establishment and operation of dedicated, purpose built or centralised facilities for the consolidation of such wastes.

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A necessary approach to storing and disposing of radioactive waste can vary greatly, depending on their physical, chemical and radiological properties. At

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5 this stage, the Commission's focus will be on wastes which generate lower levels of radiation, so called low and intermediate level waste, such as waste which might result from the production of medical radio-isotopes and other industrial processes involving radioactive materials. High level radioactive waste, including spent nuclear fuel will be considered separately in a later public session.

10 Through its enquiries to date and the submissions it has received, the Commission is aware of concerns about the risks that such wastes present to human health and the environment. The Commission is also interested to understand the factors and perspectives which need to be considered as part of developing a process to engage local communities when considering the siting of any proposed centralised facilities. As a result, the Commission will consider both the technical and social considerations which arise in this context.

20 The Commission will examine these matters by reference to case studies from around the world. It will speak with those who have been directly involved in approaches to establish centralised facilities in Australia, Belgium, Finland and Spain, with a view to identifying both the successful aspects and those which may not have delivered the outcomes initially desired.

25 The Commission's first witness today, Mr Patrick Davoren has held a number of senior positions in the Commonwealth government, where he advised on nuclear related issues and strategies. He was involved in the development of the first nationwide radioactive waste repository siting approach, in collaboration with the Bureau of Rural Sciences and ANSTO.

30 From 2005 until his retirement in 2012, Mr Davoren participated in both strategies to site a repository for Commonwealth radioactive waste, he was responsible for undertaking public engagement, developing enabling legislation and reporting to parliamentary committees in relation to those matters.

35 The Commission calls Mr Patrick Davoren.

40 COMMISSIONER: Mr Davoren, again thanks for joining us this morning. To put our discussions in context, I just want to briefly touch upon the two activities that have been conducted in Australia for medium and low level waste. Can you give us just a short precis of what was intended when both those activities commenced? And I'm thinking about the process of 78 to 92, and the process from 92 to 2004; what was the goal, and broadly what was the outcome, and then we'll go in and look at the detail.

45 MR DAVOREN: Well, I think the outcome was to develop a safe means of managing Australia's radioactive waste. Those processes were initiated in

1978 when the state and Territory health ministers approached the Commonwealth. We had no real system at that stage, we had no codes of practice that were applied, and irregular things were happening, like waste with radioactive signs on was appearing in landfills, which was quite inappropriate.

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So a meeting of health ministers approached the Commonwealth government, they wrote to the Prime Minister and the Commonwealth, state, Territory approach was agreed. This led to the formation of a Commonwealth/State working group that was going to develop appropriate codes of practice, and those codes of practice were promulgated under the National Health and Medical Research Council.

That committee fairly quickly looked at international practice and decided that the best approach for Australia was a near-surface disposal facility for low level radioactive wastes, and an interim store for intermediate level wastes. Australia's production of both categories of waste is quite low; I think you're aware that we produce about 40 cubic metres a year of low level waste. That might compare to a country like France or the UK, where they produce around 25,000 cubic metres of low level waste. We produce a couple of cubic metres of intermediate level waste every year, some of those other countries produce hundreds, up to thousands, of cubic metres of that material every year.

That Commonwealth/State committee started off the process of developing codes, out of that came a code of practice for user disposal. There's a lot of material in hospitals for instance that's of very low level radioactivity and can safely disposed of to drains and landfill, but that code told people where the cut-off point was, and gave them some certainty in their operations.

MR JACOBI: Can I just interject there, this might be a convenient point. I think we've got some slides that pick up where the waste streams are from.

MR DAVOREN: Yes.

MR JACOBI: And I think perhaps if we start with the second of the slides. Could you explain the sources of low level waste in Australia, the 40 cubic metres you've described?

MR DAVOREN: Well, this waste - these are ANSTO pictures, these are drums of waste from the ANSTO low level drum store. On the left we have typical laboratory waste, and radio-isotope processing waste. ANSTO is an important source of medical radio-nuclides for Australia and for other parts of the world, and there are laboratory activities where those nuclear medicines are separated from other radioactive material; so things that come into contact with that material will become contaminated with radioactive material, so you'll see things like gloves and wipes and over-shoes there.

5 The next drum along has got some debris; that could be debris from decommissioning of nuclear facilities at ANSTO. There is one reactor, MOATA, that's been decommissioned a few years ago. They could be bits of concrete from MOATA that are at the low level.

MR JACOBI: Although it's not shown there, I understand that there's also significant historical body of material that's soil.

10 MR DAVOREN: Well, there is. Apart from the ANSTO site, we've got about 4,000 cubic metres of low level radioactive waste and about 2,000 of that is ANSTO waste, the other 2,000 is an historic legacy from tests by CSIRO into uranium mill design. They conducted these tests at Fisherman's Bend in the middle of Melbourne, and at some stage they had to look at  
15 decommissioning that site. They removed that material and they sent it to ANSTO. ANSTO then got into trouble with the local community and the courts, and there was a court order that it be removed because ANSTO didn't have the authority to store it. That waste eventually ended up on Defence land at Woomera. That will stay there until the Commonwealth - until there is a  
20 national radioactive waste repository for low level radioactive waste.

There is some Defence low level waste; I think they have a few hundred cubic metres that's held at dispersed facilities around Australia, and there are pending items on our inventory. One case there is the waste from the Hunter's Hill  
25 radium processing facility in inner Sydney. There were high levels of soil contamination by radium, it was a radium dial production facility, and that waste is still there because no-one's been able to work out what to do with it. Some of it probably should go to a landfill, an industrial landfill, others of it is more radioactive and needs to go to a low level site.

30 COMMISSIONER: So that was the first process, 78 to 82. The outcome was clearly -

35 Mr DAVOREN: Fairly inconclusive, I think we could say. What happened was officials with great enthusiasm from all jurisdictions had a look at land within their jurisdiction and did desk studies to identify potentially suitable terrain. At the end of that exercise they went back to their governments and their governments said, with input from the political level, "We'd love to have a national repository but we don't want it in our jurisdiction." The  
40 Commonwealth approached all states and the Northern Territory again and that elicited a responsible from the Northern Territory where it said that it would be quite happy to look at a pre-feasibility study if it was funded by the Commonwealth of a low-level waste facility in the territory. That went along quite well for a while, until the Northern Territory was put off with an  
45 experience from a toxic waste incinerator which led to a lot of strong sort of

single issue politics. I think an additional factor was that it was in the chief minister's electorate, which made it quite difficult for them.

5 So really that process ended after, in 1991, Mr Crean wrote to the states and territories again and said that he was proposing a Commonwealth led approach and would they join it. So that initiated the systematic site selection study.

COMMISSIONER: Which was the second phase.

10 MR DAVOREN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER: Can you just give us a brief overview of that process.

15 MR DAVOREN: That process started in 1992 and it was essentially based on geographic information systems technology becoming available to governments. So you had the capacity to scan lots of geographic data and we looked at the geographic data that was relevant to the code of practice for siting a low-level radioactive waste facility. There was a vast data collection effort. All the states collaborated in this at the technical level, although probably at the  
20 political level our interest in particular jurisdictions wasn't appreciated. But nevertheless it was all quite workable and that produced three reports. The last of those reports - perhaps I should go through briefly what happened.

25 There was a very rigorous commitment to public comment at all phases of that approach. So a report would go out, public comment would be formally sought and assessed and a report on the public comment put out. So in addition to the five sites that were identified in that process on technical grounds - and the technical grounds included things in the code like hydrography, hydrology, geology, mineral deposits and social factors, land use, perhaps Aboriginal  
30 interests - and there were those five sites and there were three others looked at. There was Maralinga was looked at because of the common perception that Maralinga would be a suitable place. Mount Isa was looked at because the lord mayor volunteered the site back in the early 90s. The Jackson area, which encompassed the Mount Walton East repository already existing, was looked at  
35 just to see how that sort of stacked up against the code criteria.

40 Eventually the process fined in on the Woomera or Billa Kalina region. Then there were 50 sites identified there and then detailed site investigations and drilling took place. It was gradually fined down to three sites. One was excluded because it was on Defence land where there were thought to be conflicting interests. Two other sites went to environmental impact assessment and successfully got through that stage, but of course the Commonwealth had to acquire the land under the Land Acquisition Act and at this stage the state  
45 government was starting to resist the process and the premier noted that under the Land Acquisition Act the Commonwealth couldn't acquire a public park so

he moved to declare the preferred areas a public park.

There was some problems in doing that because of politics in South Australia so it might have happened and it mightn't have happened but the  
5 Commonwealth got nervous and used the expedited acquisition process under the Land Acquisition Act and that went to the Federal Court - South Australia took it to the Federal Court and Justice Selway rejected the South Australian application. It went to the full bench on appeal and South Australia then won and the Commonwealth then dropped the idea at that stage. So that was in July  
10 2004.

COMMISSIONER: Could I characterise that second process as a technical approach first and then the social approach?

15 MR DAVOREN: Yes, I think you can say that. I mean it was top-down in that the Commonwealth had essentially lost confidence in the ability to work with the states and the territories so it said it was going to identify a site and acquire it, and I think the minister may have used those words. But I think it's fair to say that once they got to the preferred region, they were taking quite a  
20 lot of notice of what local people said, there were indigenous land clearance processes initiated. There was great care taken to ensure that sacred sites were avoided. There were extensive discussions with pastoralists. There was a site office that was operating in that area for quite a long time and there was quite a lot of consultation and then there was also a Radioactive Waste Monitor, which  
25 was a news sheet that was put out on progress with the facility. But it started essentially as a top-down process.

COMMISSIONER: Counsel.

30 MR JACOBI: I just want to come to some themes and some specific issues that we're interested in understanding, bearing in mind the Australian experience, and I was interested first of all in understanding the extent to which it was thought to be important to understand community priorities and values across the great scheme of those processes and how that was done.

35 MR DAVOREN: I think we can say that there wasn't much of that in the earlier processes. I mean it was seen mainly as a technical issue. I mean the public sensitivity of these issues wasn't really realised until the states, acting as a barometer to that sensitivity, got nervous in the late 80s. But in later  
40 processes I think there was a more volunteer based process involved with the Northern Territory 2005 to 2014 activities.

MR JACOBI: Were there other factors that affected sensitivities within particular communities? I mean the Commission has read something about the  
45 effect particularly in the Northern Territory of proposals to handle hazardous

waste there. Did those sorts of matters have an impact?

5 MR DAVOREN: I think they did. Those sort of activities were getting - or that siting sensitive facilities was getting quite a lot of publicity around that time because we had the issue of the toxic waste incinerator which went through similar difficulties. I mean I think the first volunteer shire there was Corowa in New South Wales, on the Murray. It was a food bowl and a sensitive area from those sort of perspectives and that proposal lasted about 10 minutes really. Then everyone in the public knew that there were those sort of activities going on and they were starting to become sensitised to them.

15 MR JACOBI: Did community attitude have any role to play with respect to the decision to aggregate or disaggregate low-level waste and intermediate-level waste facilities?

20 MR DAVOREN: It did. There were a number of attempted compromises which were conspicuously unsuccessful. When public opposition started in the Woomera area, the Commonwealth gave up one of its sites. There was a piece of CSIRO land in the Woomera area or the Billa Kalina quarter million sheet that was particularly - it was the closest site to Coober Pedy. As you know, there were a group of indigenous women, the Coober Pedy Kunga Juta, who were getting quite a deal of publicity concerning their opposition and the Commonwealth thought that by giving up that site that could be said to be reasonably near Coober Pedy that opposition would diminish, and of course they gave up the site and the opposition didn't diminish.

25 It was unfortunate that they gave up the site because it was a piece of land the Commonwealth already owned. So had that site been used, we might now have a radioactive waste repository.

30 The other case you allude to is the issue of the intermediate-level store. The Commonwealth had proceeded on the basis that the store and the repository would be collocated but the Commonwealth thought that some of the heat on the government from location in South Australia might be diminished if they said, "Oh, no, we're taking the store away from the facility. There's going to be a separate process for the store." That proved unsuccessful from two perspectives: firstly, it didn't diminish opposition to the repository; secondly, the store process developed into a political mess because the idea was that the store would be sited on Commonwealth land, so immediately you'd be looking at Defence facilities. A lot of those facilities were near populated areas and the list of those potential sites was leaked to the press before the 2004 election. So the Commonwealth probably regretted that it separated the store and the repository.

45 MR JACOBI: Can I come to consultation. I think you've spoken of the

reports and the public comment that was sought on those reports at the time during those processes and I'm just interested to understand the extent to which how much information was made available about the technical and siting and other characteristics at the time that those processes were undertaken.

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MR DAVOREN: The reports on the siting process, the GIS siting approach that was adopted, didn't only deal with the technicalities of maps and criteria, it had substantial information on just what the proposal was. It described the sources of radioactive waste quite comprehensively. So there was a lot of information out there.

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MR JACOBI: To what extent, with respect to the particular proposals as mentioned at the facilities were defined, to what extent was it open for communities to comment on making changes to those facilities or identifying matters that might be important to them in the way that those facilities were designed or planned?

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MR DAVOREN: There was that opportunity but resort wasn't taken by most respondents to those opportunities. I think if you looked at say 300 responses you might find that 20 had those sorts of thoughts in them and largely the rest were form letters propagated by bodies such as Greenpeace.

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COMMISSIONER: Any of the particular areas under consideration, were they funded for independent advice about what was being proposed?

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MR DAVOREN: No, they weren't. The idea of the Commonwealth funding independent advice came up in the context of identifying options for cleaning up Maralinga in the early 90s. The reason that it came up there was that Aborigines were in a particular disadvantage in sort of being able to assess for themselves, having access to information. I mean a lot of the people involved weren't English speakers, for instance, and there were enormous communication difficulties. So the best thing their advisers could do was say, "Look, you know, these white guys are in the government. We know that you think they let off the bomb so how could they possibly solve the problem, they made the problem. We'll go and get some separate people."

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So the issues were a bit different from dealing with fairly sophisticated and educated people in these other regions, but certainly that idea wasn't around then for that particular group of people.

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COMMISSIONER: They might have been sophisticated but I wonder what their knowledge of nuclear activities were.

MR DAVOREN: Probably quite limited. There were some attempts at addressing that through the site office and meetings and also experts were

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made available. I think one of the most innovative approaches to that was when a very senior scientist from ANSTO, Mr Des Davey and Barry Wakeland, the member for Grey, did a pub tour and were happy to talk to anyone who wanted to listen to them about what the proposal involved.

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MR JACOBI: You've mentioned the earlier processes involving interaction between the Commonwealth and the states - and of course that's a unique characteristic that Australia has that distinguishes it from many other places - I'm just interested in the significance that that interaction between the Commonwealth and the states plays in decision-making with respect to radioactive waste management.

MR DAVOREN: It's obviously proved vital in relation to the Woomera project because it was eventually overturned because of objections ~~to~~ by the sStates. That probably arose for a couple of reasons, and the main one I think was the extended period that some of these processes took. That started off in the early 90s and we're still going in 2000. So after long periods you lose bipartisanship, if you've ever had it. The Labour Party forgets when they're in opposition or when they're in state government how difficult it was when they were in federal power to get a project going and there's obviously political imperatives to pursue.

COMMISSIONER: In terms of bipartisanship, when we think back to both those separate processes, was there a stage where there was bipartisan support for either of the projects? I appreciate the length of time and the impact that that has on decision-making, but was there at any stage a sort of bipartisan support for the concept of a repository?

MR DAVOREN: I don't think there was strong bipartisanship. I think we thought that when you're in a situation where the Labor Party was in government it was easier because the natural position of the conservative parties was to say, "Oh, well, you know, you've got to do something about that." But that even couldn't be assured when the Labor process was introduced in the early 90s. There was moves from a Liberal senator to have a senate select committee into the dangers of radioactive waste. I think the name of the committee indicates where they were coming from. So there was no bipartisanship around then. I think one of the ministers commented when introducing the 2005 legislation that it was strange that South Australia, a Labor government, had torpedoed what was a Labor project, but he could probably be forgiven for doing so because it started so many years before.

So bipartisanship is rare. The capacity for a government to legislate federally is rare. There was a rare opportunity in 2005, after the 2004 elections, when the coalition had the numbers in the senate and the Howard government made use of that opportunity.

MR JACOBI: I think if we could deal with the bipartisanship. To what extent  
- I'm also interested in cross-jurisdictional support; that is, is it simply the  
question of the relationship between the state and the Commonwealth where  
5 the state in which it's proposed to host the repository, or is there a broader issue  
with respect to all states and the Commonwealth agreeing on what needs to be  
done?

MR DAVOREN: I think the answer to all this is, I think state governments  
10 feel compelled to get involved when parts of their community are experiencing  
opposition or, at worst, outrage. So I think the answer to those sort of  
pressures on state governments is to provide reassurance and information to  
people that might be affected by the projects.

MR JACOBI: Can I just pick up - you spoke of there being a shift from the  
15 states to the Commonwealth in terms of being - who is the proponent for the  
project. I'm just interested in your observations about the effect of the  
responsible authority for the siting, what effect that's had on the success or  
otherwise of these projects.

MR DAVOREN: The responsible authority to date has been a  
20 Commonwealth department and it's been the Resources Department and its  
successors through various governments. The responsibility for Maralinga and  
for radioactive waste management generally was passed to the National  
25 Development and Energy portfolio and its successors have had that  
responsibility. I think there would be some countries that have the approach of  
having an independent radioactive waste management organisation, and  
although it might seem strange to have an organisational structure like that  
when you're dealing with such small amounts, in fact, people overseas regard  
30 our amounts as trivial and can't see why we're having a problem with them, but  
of course it doesn't matter, you've got the same issues with these things  
whether you've got 1000 cubic metres or whether you've got 100,000, and so I  
think there may be some merit in looking at some organisation like that which  
could be given the long-term job so political issues wouldn't affect them quite  
35 so much, like whether you delay the release of a report until after an election,  
that's a typical scenario that governments face, so I think there would be some  
advantage in doing that.

MR JACOBI: Can I pick up the issue of delays. To what extent have delays  
40 characterised the process, and to what extent do delays present risks or issues?

MR DAVOREN: I think delays present enormous risks to these sorts of  
projects, and I think that was touched upon in the evidence given a week ago  
by one of the American experts, that it's impacted quite a lot on the recent  
45 Commonwealth experience. It's important to realise that there was a two year

hiatus after the land at Muckaty was nominated. After the nomination was accepted by the Howard government, it took the Rudd government about two years before it would even address the issue.

5 Now, during that time there was increasing dissent in the Muckaty area largely driven by external influences, but it was there nevertheless, and those people who had nominated their land in good faith were subject to a fair amount of abuse locally, and they couldn't turn around and say, "Well, it was a sensible thing to do because we were getting these benefits," because they weren't  
10 getting the benefits, nothing happened. The whole project was frozen, and that was a disgraceful way to treat some people who had nominated their land in good faith, and I think that led to the eventual failure of that process.

Of course, litigation can play a role in this, as the opponents of these projects  
15 well realise. The litigation in the Muckaty case was launched in 2010, and it wasn't until 2012 that we could get into a court, and it then went on for two years before the litigation was dropped with the agreement of both sides. Now, that was bad enough, but during that period we were inhibited from doing public information activities and pursuing the issue with the local people, so all  
20 the information that was getting out there in the community was on the anti side, so delay is crucial. It's crucial to avoid those delays.

MR JACOBI: We've heard a bit about the concept of communities having the option to withdraw from processes, and I'm just interested in the significance of  
25 the Australian experience to the extent to which opting in or out has been a part of the processes that Australia has pursued.

MR DAVOREN: Well, I don't think it really has, in a structured sense, but I think it was a factor in the Commonwealth withdrawing from the Muckaty site  
30 because it thought there was a whole lot of people that are opposed. From a strict Northern Land Council Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976 perspective, that didn't matter so much because the processes were followed and the view of the owners of that land didn't change, but there was clearly a change in opinion for whatever reason, so I think there has been some sensitivity about changes in  
35 approach even though that wasn't a structured part of the process.

MR JACOBI: We're also interested in understanding the extent to which flexibility is an important part of processes, and I think perhaps it follows from the description you've outlined that the earlier processes weren't necessarily  
40 that flexible, but what was the case with the later processes?

MR DAVOREN: The later process was flexible because things arose which we hadn't expected and the Commonwealth was able to respond to them. The Northern Territory process started on the basis of three defence sites in the  
45 Northern Territory, and it was reasonably clear from the outset that those sites

weren't particularly good. The land at the southern sites, the Jindalee over the horizon radar sites, the sending station there was very constrained because you couldn't stand in front of the transmitter which was sending out incredible amounts of electromagnetic radiation, and you couldn't site anything in front of the receiving site because it was measuring very sensitive signals.

You might have been able to squeeze something in behind those sites. The northern site at Fishers Ridge was a wet site and the geology was not all that favourable, so you would have to build a highly engineered facility pretty much like the one in Spain that you've been introduced to by Mr Garcia-Neri. The Commonwealth had a certain motivation to be flexible, so when we went to brief the Northern Land Council on this, and said, "This is what is happening in your jurisdiction," they were quite interested, and without us knowing they had actually asked some of their constituent communities whether they were interested, and it turned out they were.

The Commonwealth was flexible to the extent that it amended the Radioactive Waste Management Act 2005, during passage, to include provisions for a volunteer Aboriginal site. It was something that we hadn't even contemplated at the start of that process.

MR JACOBI: We've also heard about the importance of informed consent with respect to those volunteer processes. I'm just interested to understand the extent to which and how information was provided to the Aboriginal community about the nature of the proposal once they had nominated how they were informed of what it was that was proposed to be developed.

MR DAVOREN: Well, we got in well before the nomination. There's a very formal process under the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, and that is a sequence of information meetings, and then there's a decision meeting, and that process is applied regardless. The people at Muckaty Station had already been through a process like that for the Darwin to Alice Springs railway easement which went through their property, and also the gas pipeline, so in those information meetings we attended and briefed the community.

We really weren't all that happy with that, we wanted to do a bit more, so we took them down to Lucas Heights and we showed them the waste at Lucas Heights. They were briefed on what radiation is by some people who had experience in communicating with indigenous communities through the Maralinga project, and we got to the stage where those people were able to recognise different types of radiation through the things that would stop them, and so there was a fair amount of that sort of communication which hadn't been done before.

Then later on we thought, "Well, we can't show them a repository." The

Western Australian government is not all that keen on giving access to its facility, and of course that's an atypical facility, so we said to the land council that it would be good if we could show the people that facility, and they said, "Well, you can," and we went to Spain and we took a mixture of people, not necessarily people who were in favour, a sprinkling of Muckaty community people and some council members of the Northern Land Council to Andalusia and showed them the facility, and they crawled over it and under it.

We then took them to meetings with the local mayor and the local community, and to deal with the bush tucker issue we had a meal of some food that was shot near the site, so we thought that provided a fairly comprehensive briefing on what was entailed in a radioactive waste facility, and also the associated treatment facilities that are at that site. I don't see how we could have shown them anything that was more relevant than that.

MR JACOBI: The Commission is concerned with lessons learnt, and I think bearing in mind the issues that we've discussed do you have a view as to what are the lessons we've learnt or should draw from the Australian siting experience?

MR DAVOREN: Yes, I've got a few thoughts on that. I would reiterate the issue of delay. You avoid political delays by having a dedicated body to execute this project. You have a dedicated body to execute the project if you have a moment of political consensus because the thing would be a statutory organisation, one would think, so you would have to have a brief moment of harmony in the senate. I also think it's important to give a lot more thought to providing information to the community. I think the idea of independent scientific advice is generally a good one.

I also think that the current regulator is very open to providing information and going anywhere and talking to anyone, and I think you should have the Commonwealth regulator, that is, ARPANSA, as the sort of people's experts. They keep an appropriate distance from proponents, so I think you can do that. I think that would be quite a convenient way of helping communities to understand the project.

COMMISSIONER: I think, Mr Davoren, that exhausts us for the lessons learnt. I thank you very much for very clear evidence, we very much appreciate the work that you've put in to this open hearing. On that note, we will adjourn until 1100.

MR DAVOREN: I'm pleased to help.