

## Submission to SA Royal Commission on Nuclear Fuel Cycle in response to its Tentative Findings (of February 2016)

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I wish to make some comments to inform the Royal Commission's thinking in its developing of its findings and recommendations.

In the Overview of the Tentative Findings, the Royal Commission posits that it is possible for South Australia to “safely increase its participation in nuclear activities and, by doing so, significantly improve the economic welfare of the South Australian community” (p2). This increased participation is to be achieved by developing an “integrated storage and disposal facility” (p3).

It seems notable that the Royal Commission recognises that the prospects that the market for nuclear fuel will increase in the foreseeable future are low – it is not thought very likely. This seems to imply a recognition that the future prospects of nuclear energy production are quite limited, at best.

The quantum of jobs that are suggested to likely result from developing an “integrated storage and disposal facility” does not seem very significant in the context of the whole of the South Australian economy, and it being an extremely capital intensive operation it is most likely that the investment of such sums in other, less environmentally dangerous endeavours, would produce more employment and greater benefits to the South Australian economy .

It also seems of note that the Royal Commission recognises that the renewable energy sector, particularly in South Australia, has become increasingly cost-competitive with other, 'traditional' sources of energy production, and that the indications are that this trend will continue.

The idea of increasing South Australia's involvement in the nuclear power industry seems illogical at a time when renewable energy sources are becoming increasingly competitive with 'traditional' sources of energy. South Australia should continue on the renewable energy path upon which it has embarked with such success over the past decade or so, and in so doing create many, many more jobs than offered by expanding South Australia's involvement in the nuclear fuel industry, an industry which the Royal Commission itself recognises does not offer prospects of growing at the international level. It does not seem sensible to be increasing involvement in an industry that is arguably on the decline.

There is no substantial indication that the need to manage extremely dangerous radioactive waste for thousands of years can be avoided. It seems that it is an accepted fact that the nuclear power industry produces extremely dangerous radioactive waste that will have to be 'managed' for thousands of years.

Some may accept the notion that the nuclear power industry is safe, but it is a proposition open to much debate.

It seems difficult to maintain that the nuclear power industry is safe while the waste produced by the industry includes material that needs to be completely contained and isolated from the environment for thousands of years.

To pursue establishing a nuclear waste management facility in South Australia would leave a poisoned legacy for many generations to come, actually for all generations to come, given the incomprehensible time-frame entailed: thousands of years, even hundreds of thousands of years!

It is hard to conceive of a more poisoned legacy!

Yes, as the Royal Commission recognises, social and community support for such an undertaking is vital. What approach will the Government take to determine this issue?

If the people of South Australia were given the opportunity to determine whether South Australia develops an “integrated storage and disposal facility” it is difficult to imagine that a majority would support developing such a facility.

How long can our ('white', industrialised) civilisation be seen to have existed, continuously – a few hundred years (from European Restoration and Industrial Revolution), or maybe a couple of thousand (if see a line descending from Ancient Greece and Rome to today)?

The longevity of the civilisation of the First Peoples of this continent, some 40,000 years and more, seems of a rather different scale altogether.

It seems appropriate that we should take counsel on this issue from the descendants of the longest continuously existing human civilisation, descendants of the Aboriginal civilisation in South Australia.

More than that, proper recognition of the prior occupation of the Aboriginal Nations of South Australia should entail recognition of their rights to their lands and waters and thus their right to determine whether a nuclear waste management facility should be developed on their land.