

# We call on the Citizens' Jury to respect the Aboriginal First Nations

## Enough is enough: we say NO!

### Irati Wanti, Vasinyi / 'The Poison – Leave It'

**Port Augusta, September 2016:**

South Australian *Anangu and Yura* (Aboriginal Traditional Owners) call on the Citizens' Jury to reject the plan to turn our homelands into stores and dumps for international high-level nuclear waste.

The nuclear industry has a track record of Aboriginal dispossession and environmental pollution - from the atomic bomb tests to uranium mining to nuclear waste dump proposals.

The government says the nuclear waste dump proposal is different to the atomic bomb tests, but *Inaadi vasinyi* - radiation is radiation, poison is poison. Governments stripped Aboriginal people of land, land rights and heritage protections for atomic bomb tests and uranium mining, and exactly the same thing will happen with the high-level nuclear waste dump. Aboriginal Traditional Owners have first-hand experience. Poisoned water, poisoned plants, poisoned animals, poisoned people.

To this day Traditional Owners wear the scars and hurt and pain but still continue to tell their stories. We take responsibility to share our *muda, tjukurpa, wapar* (ancestral stories) and insist that you also respect our songlines.

We've seen this happen too many times before.

In the past we had no voice but today we have a voice and must be listened to. Then, we had no rights. Now we have rights and those rights must be respected.

We will oppose this dangerous matter and will not allow our sacred land to be sacrificed for a nuclear waste dump.

Health and well-being is so important in our lives. The Royal Commission process has already caused us stress, anxiety, and ill-health.

The Royal Commission and the SA government have shown ignorance of cultural issues affecting Aboriginal Traditional Owners. Let us remind you about the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples, including Article 29.2 about the rights of Indigenous people to say no to *vasinyi, irati* (toxic, poison) waste dumps.

Stop ignoring the Traditional Owners of the land! Enough is enough. We say NO!

We call on the Citizens' Jury to respect Aboriginal First Nations and to reject the high-level nuclear waste dump plan.

#### Signatories

**Adnyamathanha:** Noelene Ryan Lester, Enice Marsh, Lesley Coulthard, Heather Stuart (Luritja / Adnyamathanha yurartu), Lavene Ngatokorua (Wankangurru / Adnyamathanha), Regina McKenzie (Adnyamathanha / Kuyani / Luritja), Markeeta Stuart and Clay Stuart (Adnyamathanha / Luritja / Kuyani / Arabunna), Charles Jackson, Vivianne McKenzie.  
**Pitjantjatjara:** Mima Maureen Smart OAM, Keith Peters, Roslyn Peters, Desmond Chuna, Joy West, Tjunkuna Rita Bryant, Roslyn Mervyn, Audra Bridley, Maureen Williams (Pitjantjatjara / Antikirinya), Benjamin Koko, Tjimpayi, Nyimpula Edie King and Betty Nyangala Muffler (Pitjantjatjara / Yankunytjatjara).  
**Yankunytjatjara:** Irene Johnson, Pinku Dianne Edwards, Karina Lester, Lucy Waniwa Lester. **Ngarrindjeri / Maori:** Laura Winslow. **Antikirinya / Yankunytjatjara:** Joanne Crombie, Karen Crombie. **Luritja:** Joanne Walker. **Gunditjmara / Boandik:** Johnny Lovett.

Coming together in Port Augusta for the Exposure community expo on radioactive waste, September 2016.



# Disrespect from Kevin Scarce and the Royal Commission

## Aboriginal Congress of South Australia submission to the Royal Commission | August 2015:

*We, as native title representatives of lands and waters of South Australia, stand firmly in opposition to nuclear developments on our country, including all plans to expand uranium mining, and implement nuclear reactors and nuclear waste dumps on our land.*

*Many of us suffer to this day the devastating effects of the nuclear industry and continue to be subject to it through extensive uranium mining on our lands and country that has been contaminated. We view any further expansion of industry as an imposition on our country, our people, our environment, our culture and our history. We also view it as a blatant disregard for our rights under various legislative instruments, including the founding principles of this state.*

Aboriginal Congress of South Australia meeting in Port Augusta, attended by representatives of the following native title groups: Adnyamathanha Aboriginal Corporation, Antakirinja Matu-Tankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation, Barngarla, De Rose Hill Ilpalka Aboriginal Corporation, Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation, Kurna, Kokotha Aboriginal Corporation, Narungga Aboriginal Corporation, Nauo, Ngadjuri Nations Aboriginal Corporation, Ngarrindjeri, Nukunu, Tjauwara Unmurru Aboriginal Corporation, Wangkangurru Yarluyandi Aboriginal Corporation, Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka Traditional Land Owners Aboriginal Corporation, Yankunytjatjara Native Title Aboriginal Corporation.

## Tauto Sansbury, Chairperson of the Aboriginal Congress of South Australia:

*In our second meeting with [Royal Commissioner Kevin Scarce] we had 27 Native Title groups from all around South Australia. We had a vote on it. And it was unanimous that the vote said no we don't want it. It was absolutely unanimous. Commissioner Scarce said well maybe I'm talking to the wrong people and we said well what other people are you going to talk to? We're Native Title claimants, we're Native Title Traditional Owners from all over this country ... this land ... so who else are you going to pluck out of the air to talk to ... we've stuck to our guns and we still totally oppose it. That's every Native Title group in South Australia.*

## Combined statement to the Royal Commission:

*We as the traditional custodians of this land oppose any activity which would seek to undermine the innate cultural connection we have with country. Our past, present and future is connected to country and our ancestral stories connect us to it and all things that reside on country. To interfere with these storylines is to disconnect our people from Mother Earth, and from each other.*

Antakirinja Matu-Yankunytjatjara Aboriginal Corporation (registered native title body corporate - RNTBC); Dieri Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC; Irrwanyere Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC; Narungga Nations Aboriginal Corporation; Nauo Native Title Claimants; Ngadjuri Nation Aboriginal Corporation; Yankunytjatjara Native Title Aboriginal Corporation; Yandruwandha Yawarrawarrka Traditional Land Owners Aboriginal Corporation.

## 'Nuclear' - A Creative Response

Alphaville arts company has mounted a showcase in Adelaide that exposes the legacy of the nuclear age through the creative arts. Titled simply 'Nuclear', the showcase brings together digital arts, immersive film projections, photographs, radio, sculptures, and works on canvas.

**Where:** Tandanya National Aboriginal Cultural Institute, 253 Grenfell St, Adelaide.

**When:** The Showcase is on now, and runs until November 12.

**Details:** [www.tandanya.com.au/event/nuclear/](http://www.tandanya.com.au/event/nuclear/)

# NO RADIOACTIVE WASTE DUMP



Edie King, Betty Muffler and Karina Lester in September 2016.

## Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress | August 2015:

We, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Adelaide Congress Ministry say to the Uniting Church:

Mr Weatherill and the Labor Party do not appear to be being really honest. They seem to be saying one thing and working towards another. They say they have made no decision - but to us they look like they are working towards a nuclear dump.

We reject the Government's betrayal of the clean land and water and air! God has given good things that we need that we all might nurture them and live well!

We reject the Government's betrayal of First People. The Government should respect the First People who speak for their country, and honour their sovereignty - they say no!

We reject the Government's promotion of money being more important than righteousness and justice - to emphasise the short term money value, and at the same time make unprovable assessments of risk over so many years seems either dishonest, or just crazy.

We reject the Government's denial of the experience and suffering of our families as they experienced the effects of waste and bombs. We have people in our families who were affected.

We reject the government's dishonesty and playing with words - in trying to slice off the bombs from the waste, the Maralinga tests from the waste, the fears from the facts, and the risks from the profits. It is wrong!

This is a fact: We say No! No! No!

## Combined statement, Port Augusta | 16 May 2015:

South Australian Traditional Owners say NO! We oppose plans for uranium mining, nuclear reactors and nuclear waste dumps on our land. We call on the SA Royal Commission to recommend against any uranium mining and nuclear projects on our lands. We call on the Australian population to support us in our campaign to prevent dirty and dangerous nuclear projects being imposed on our lands and our lives and future generations.

Endorsed by members from the following groups: Kokatha, Kokatha-Mirning, Arabunna, Adnyamathanha, Yankunytjatjara-Pitjanjatjara, Antikirinya-Yunkunytjatjara, Kuyani, Aranda, Western Aranda, Dieri, Larrakia, Wiradjuri.

Endorsed by people from the following groups at later meetings: Warramungu, Warlpiri, Western Desert Cultural Bloc.

## Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation, submission to the Royal Commission:

It seems that each generation of Kokatha People is required to oppose the use, transport or storage of nuclear materials and their opposition is not heard. Kokatha consider the raising of this issue again, when it was resolved only a short period of time ago, is disrespectful.

Kokatha are strongly opposed to any level of storage of medium and high level radioactive waste on their traditional country. This includes medium and high level nuclear waste from Australia or overseas. Generally, timeframes for dealing with radioactive waste ranges from 10,000 to 1,000,000 years. The storage of radioactive waste for extraordinarily long and indefinite periods of time is not a proper use of country and does harm to this and future generations.

**Mima Smart OAM,  
Yalata Community, 2016:**

*We don't want that waste on our land. Please take it away to your country and dump it over there. Because the damage that was already done, we learned from it, we teach all our children what the poison is about. Our people didn't have rights in that time. So now we got rights, we can speak up for justice. It's for our children's children.*



**Maureen Williams (Pitjantjatjara / Antikirinya), Rowena Williams (Antikirinya / Yankunyatjara / Pitjantjatjara), Gary Crombie, Michael Brown, and Romano Williams (Pitjantjatjara / Antikirinya) - Umoona Community, Coober Pedy, August 2016 (abridged):**

*We're not a dump in South Australia! We want to keep it beautiful.*

*They want to bring it where Anangu are. It might be a desert area but we still go out hunting. We still live off the land. We still take our kids out hunting as well. It's in our artwork – that tells the story.*

*They're trying to say it's safe. It's not safe!*

*As soon as money is mentioned, some people change - get interested. But we're Anangu – we're from this country. Not from somewhere else.*

*We're not going to take the world's rubbish.*

**Pinku Dianne Edwards (Pitjantjatjara / Yankunyatjara Elder) and Elsie Numitja Illi (Pitjantjatjara Elder), Ceduna, August 22, 2016:**

*We've got to say NO to this high-level radioactive waste! We've got to think about the people. We've got to think about the animals and our bush tucker. We've got to think about the country.*

*We need the animals – they are our diet – kangaroos, lizards, wombats, rabbits, bullocks, sheep.*

*We have talked over and over about these things and they are still pina wiya – no ears! They, the government people, still don't listen.*

*We say NO! Wanti! Leave it!*

*This is our land.*

**Keith Peters,  
member & immediate past  
Chairperson of the  
Maralinga Tjarutja  
Council, Yalata, 2016:**

*This waste is going to damage our country, our environment, it's going to damage everything. It's going to bring sickness to people.*

*Enough is enough! They've already damaged our country, Maralinga, and we are not going to have this disaster again. We need to keep our environment clean, and all the animals that we eat out here, so we can survive, so our next generation of children, they can survive. We can stand up together. It's not only Aboriginal people, it's all South Australians need to stand up and say no.*



**Yami Lester, Yankunyatjara elder blinded by the Totem 1 atomic bomb test:**

*A few years ago they cleaned up Maralinga from the waste that was left over from the bomb tests ... and now they're going to put more waste back there? That's not fair because it's Anangu land and they won't be able to use that land. Members from the APY, Maralinga-Tjarutja and Arabunna, Kokatha lands say we don't want nuclear waste on our land.*

Image on left: Yami Lester with daughter Rosemary, granddaughter Kiah and great-grand-daughter Lucy.

