
Campaign to scrap SA nuclear waste dump plans goes national

Reporter: Stephanie Corsetti
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ELEANOR HALL: Traditional owners from South Australia are travelling to Victoria this week to plead with the Federal Resources Minister to stop a nuclear waste dump on their land.

The group of Adnyamathanha women are from the Flinders Ranges say it'll be the first time they've made their case directly to the Minister, Josh Frydenberg.

As Stephanie Corsetti reports.

(Adnyamathanha woman singing)

STEPHANIE CORSETTI: Hundreds of kilometres away from the Indigenous protected Yappala Station, Victorians listen to the sounds of the Adnyamathanha people.

Traditional owner Vivianne McKenzie addressed a town hall meeting in the Melbourne suburb of Northcote last night.

VIVIANNE MCKENZIE: This is what you call the genocide once again of Aboriginal people.

On the land, we are only a minority group in this country. They tell us we're only three per cent, but I'll tell you what, by the time we finish this campaign to stop this waste dump, we'll be at 300 per cent in this country.

(Sound of applause)

STEPHANIE CORSETTI: The Federal Government is looking for what it calls a "willing community" to host a national radioactive waste management facility.

Land-holders put forward possible locations and a site approximately 130 kilometres from Port Augusta has been short-listed.

Now the McKenzie's have travelled across the border to Victoria to send their message to the Federal Government.

VIVIANNE MCKENZIE: This is mental and emotional abuse, on the minds of adults, on children, you see the generational abuse on Aboriginal people.

STEPHANIE CORSETTI: Vivianne's sister is Regina McKenzie.

REGINA MCKENZIE: If we were to go to a Catholic church or the Vatican and ask them to move or say we want to move the Vatican five miles over and put a waste dump there, that's the same thing.

It's our belief system.

STEPHANIE CORSETTI: Last month, the Federal Government said it would accept new nominations for the nuclear waste site after narrowing down the list to the South Australian site near Yappala Station.

The Federal Resources Minister Josh Frydenberg has agreed to meet the McKenzies on Thursday in his Melbourne electorate of Kooyong.

Dr Jim Green from Friends of the Earth is calling for a national campaign against the nuclear plans.

JIM GREEN: There's unanimous opposition from traditional owners, it's an extraordinarily beautiful part of the iconic Flinders Ranges, and I really wonder why it was chosen in the first place. And I'm sure they were aware of the possibility that it's not going to go ahead, and that's why they've opened up nominations from other land holders from around Australia.

STEPHANIE CORSETTI: Dave Sweeney from the Australian Conservation Foundation agrees.

DAVE SWEENEY: It's a test of our maturity to have a debate about a difficult policy issue, and it's also a test of how we view and relate with the First Nations people of Australia.

STEPHANIE CORSETTI: The Federal Government says it hasn't made a final decision and consultation with the Indigenous community is an integral part of the process.

Minister Frydenberg says a heritage assessment will be done with the traditional owners to ensure the area is protected.

ELEANOR HALL: Stephanie Corsetti reporting.