

Hunters Hill: Nelson Parade residents reject plans to contain contaminated material

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Hunters Hill residents have persuaded the council to reject a report calling for contaminated material to be encapsulated in two concrete cells in the former uranium smelter site at Nelson Parade.



Stephen McGlynn, Phillipa Clark, Diella Bolzano-Volpato and Kim Haven in front of the contaminated site. Picture: Troy Snook

The council's submission into the Property NSW's Preferred Project Report, for which submissions close on Friday, will now proceed to the Independent Planning Commission.

The decades-long issue to remediate the site, which has low-level radioactive waste, attracted 14 speakers at Monday night's council meeting — six for and eight against.

Hunters Hill Environment Action Group chairman John Atkin said the council should continue to advocate for full removal but supported remediation.

He urged the council to continue working with Property NSW and for the community to focus on health more than property values.

“They overlook ... the health risk of the waste being left in its current, uncontrolled state,” he said.

“The stigma affecting property values is long standing and is not going to lift overnight.

“However, approval of the proposal on this basis (encapsulation) will enable work to commence on the remediation straight away — a legally enforceable commitment from government, ultimately, to remove all the waste should lead to alleviation of the stigma in the shortest possible time.”



The radioactive site at Nelson Parade. Picture: Troy Snook

He reminded the meeting that the material was not going to a facility at Kemps Creek so on-site containment was the best option.

However, Nelson Parade Action Group president Philippa Clark said the Property NSW report omitted that 75 per cent of Nelson Parade residents rejected encapsulation and failed to meet requirements under the Contaminated Land Management Act.

“We fear it’s going to make our lives worse,” she said.

“The cells will make the stigma permanent, our anxiety increased, trapped in unsaleable homes.”

Mrs Clark called for a “dig and go” full removal of the material instead of encapsulation, which she claimed would generate noise and neighbourhood disruption to install the cells.

She also feared storing radioactive material in a residential street would set an Australian precedent.

“We do know there are places and we do know that the government knows there are places, they just lack the will,” she said.

Last year, she said there were 100 temporary dumping sites across Australia.

After the meeting, Deputy Mayor Ben Collins said he was disappointed measures to contain the site were not supported because there were no alternative sites to shift the material from the former Radium Hill Company land.

“Ultimately everyone wants to move it off site but in the meantime let’s contain it,” he said.

In 2008 there was a Parliamentary inquiry into the site. In 2010, the State Government ruled out dumping the waste at Kemps Creek.

The report can be viewed at service.nsw.gov.au until Friday. Make a submission at majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au

<https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/newslocal/northern-district-times/hunters-hill-nelson-pde-residents-reject-plans-to-contain-contaminated-material/news-story/71fe3cb749e062baa5c1d55a8659c240>