

Hunters Hill group accuses our local MPs of broken promises

OUR local politicians have been accused of broken promises and a failure to remove the stigma on Hunters Hill as a municipality blighted by radio active contamination.

Hunters Hill's Nelson Parade Action Group made the accusation against Ryde MP Victor Dominello and Lane Cove MP Anthony Roberts on Friday in response to a new \$30 million proposal - put to a meeting of residents last week by Property NSW - to concentrate high and low levels of radio active waste in residential Nelson Parade and bury the concentrated waste under concrete.

Although the bureaucrats regard the concrete option as a safe alternative on a contaminated site owned by Property NSW, the Action Group says the latest plan fails to meet resident demands to have the waste removed and thereby remove the stigma of Hunters Hill being a contaminated suburb.

"Under the new plan, contamination would be permanently encapsulated in the street because the (combined) level would be higher than any radioactive material permanently stored in New South Wales," Nelson Parade Action Group spokesperson Philippa Clark said on Friday.

"Nelson Parade residents are desperate for the state government to remove the radioactive material after years of being trapped in un-saleable homes, suffering anxiety from the stigma and ongoing stress from the government's endless hollow promises and failure to resolve the issue.

"Even children are not allowed to come and play here because their parents are worried the street is unsafe while residents suffer mocking, teasing and embarrassment."

Mr Dominello is the Minister responsible for Property New South Wales and Mr Roberts is the Minister for Planning and both bear the brunt of the Action Group's anger.

"Minister Dominello wrote to residents stating that they are committed to remediating the entire site by removing the contaminated soil down to bedrock," Ms Clark said.

"Within a month, they broke this promise and began planning encapsulation on the site.

"This government has even failed in its promise to the people and parliament because in 2009 following a Parliamentary Inquiry, it promised to remove all contamination



Hunters Hill Emeritus Mayor and Independent candidate for Lane Cove Richard Quinn joined local environmental activist Philippa Clark at Nelson Parade on Friday where he spoke out against what he said was a state government failure to remove radioactive waste from the street's contaminated site. TWT on-the-spot PHOTO.

but has chosen to do nothing for 10 years."

Mr Roberts has expressed genuine concerns about the issue during exclusive interviews with The Weekly Times but has not escaped criticism.

"Anthony Roberts has been our local member for 15 years and his plan has been to do nothing on a Nelson Parade clean up for all those years," Ms Clark said.

"Under pressure of a looming election, he has sought to sweep the issue under the carpet with a poorly conceived plan to kick the issue to the next generations."

Hunters Hill Emeritus Mayor Richard Quinn is an Independent candidate for Lane Cove at the March election and has alleged the government will not move the waste to a treatment site in Western Sydney for political reasons.

He said it fears a backlash against the Liberal vote in the Western Sydney marginal seat of Mulgoa if the so-called "silvertails" of Hunters Hill were to have their waste moved west.

"The waste site at Mulgoa is handling more toxic contaminated waste on a daily basis including waste from overseas," he said.

"So burying the waste in Hunters Hill is a political decision by a government driven by politics," he said.

"This is a short term political fix, not a solution and I strongly believe you will not remove the stigma on Hunters Hill until you remove this hazardous waste."

Property NSW bureaucrats have previously stressed that their actions have been driven by a desire to find the best and safest outcomes but Philippa Clarke agrees with Mr Quinn.

"Their plan to encapsulate under concrete is driven by political considerations and the brief to Property NSW was to find the solution with the least political pain."

"There was no expert informed decision making, no solution driven by environmental priorities, no meaningful community consultation but only a plan that politicians thought would get them through this election without media attention."

Hunters Hill Council's position is that the radio active material must be removed and Ms Clark said the Council has been snubbed.

"The government showed no evidence of listening to the majority of residents who disagreed with them and ignored Hunters Hill Council's unanimous rejection of the plan of encapsulation.

"The government has shown complete disregard for Hunters Hill Council whose Zoning Regulations clearly do not allow industrial structures to be constructed in a residential street."

"Their plan is a very costly option allocating \$30 million of taxpayer money to build the encapsulation cell, an option estimated by experts to be much more expensive than off site disposal in an appropriately licensed facility."