

Clean it up NOW!

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Hunters Hill Mayor Mark Bennett and former mayor Richard Quinn are again calling on the State Government to remove radioactive waste in Hunters Hill. TWT on-the-spot PHOTO

BY OUR CIVIC ROUNDSMAN

Hunters Hill Mayor Mark Bennett and former mayor Richard Quinn have again called on the State Government to remove the radioactive toxic waste in Nelson Parade immediately.

Nelson Parade is in the electorate of Lane Cove MP and Minister for Planning Anthony Roberts and Ryde MP Victor Dominello who is the Minister for Property responsible for the clean-up.

Residents are fuming over a toxic idea to bury Hunters Hill's Nelson Parade radioactive contamination waste in a roadside bunker on the site.

State government bureaucrats held meetings with residents in and around Hunters Hill's Nelson Parade last week to suggest burying local contaminated waste under an onsite concrete bunker.

Outraged residents said the concrete bunker option was put to them by Property NSW bureaucrats alongside an option to remove five of an estimated 100 barrels of radioactive and other waste to a storage depot in Lidcombe.

A packed meeting at last Tuesday night's special meeting of Hunters Hill Council saw them vent their anger and accuse the government of political gutlessness.

Philippa Clark from the Nelson Parade Action Group described the bunker option as outrageous and demanded Lane Cove MP Anthony Roberts intervene to uphold previous government commitments to remove all contaminated waste from Nelson Parade and surrounding areas.

“This government has shown a callous disregard for the safety of residents and there is no precedent for storing radioactive waste in a residential street,” she said.

“Mr Roberts should be forced to move this waste within 90 days and this is exactly what residents are fighting for.”

Ms Clark described local residents as “incredibly stressed” after being put through ten years of “hollow” government promises.

Her comments were backed by Mayor Mark Bennett.

“Nothing is more important than the health and safety of our residents and this will always remain Hunters Hill Council’s first priority,” he told The Weekly Times.

“Health and safety must also remain the State Government’s first priority.

“The un-remediated site in Nelson Parade is having a significant psycho-social impact upon the local Hunters Hill community.”

Deputy Mayor Ross Williams – who is an environmental scientist – warned of an increased risk of fume emission from a bunker.

“If it is to come out in a vent from the bunker it will come out in a more concentrated form,” he said.

“Radon gas will not cease and concrete has a life span, nobody in their right mind would say that is a final solution.”

Save Hunters Hill Municipality spokesman Phil Jenkyn OAM said the state government could even attempt to hide the bunker beneath a park.

“It wants kids to come and play in a park with radon gas coming out, it is bizarre and it is worse than that!” he said.

“You are not supposed to build a World War Two concrete bunker in a residential area when all the expert reports say this (contamination) should go off site.”

The contamination is about 100 years old and residents were first alerted to the danger in 1965. Since then there has been myriad scientific surveys, a 2008 parliamentary enquiry and even a 2014 Environmental Protection Authority order which all say the waste must be removed.

Residents were recently given some hope when Ryde MP and Finance Minister Victor Dominello – who is also the Minister responsible for site owner Property NSW – spoke of the possibility of moving the waste to South Australia.

Former Hunters Hill Mayor Richard Quinn spoke at the council meeting and blasted what he described as a lack of political will to move the waste to the appropriate facility at Kemps Creek, where some local residents have opposed waste from “silvertail” Hunters Hill being stored in their marginal electorate of Mulgoa.

“This is all about a lack of political will to do the right thing by our residents,” Mr Quinn said.

