

Nelson Parade radio active waste could end up on site



Former Hunters Hill Mayor Richard Quinn and current Mayor Mark Bennett support the removal of the radio active waste from Nelson Parade. TWT on-the-spot PHOTO

RESIDENTS in contaminated Nelson Parade in Hunters Hill have been stunned by a recent state government announcement that the radio active waste in their street could end up being encapsulated in an on site concrete bunker.

The residents were notified of the announcement in a letter from Property NSW but Philippa Clark from the Nelson Parade Action Group told The Weekly Times she is shocked by the what she blasted as "a blatant betrayal" from our local politicians.

"We are devastated by this decision, despite assurances from Ryde MP Victor Dominello and Lane Cove MP Anthony Roberts this waste would be removed as well the findings of a parliamentary inquiry to have it removed," she said.

"There is no way we are going to give up the fight and we are going to make the (March) election campaign are very feisty one."

The issue has divided Nelson Parade with some residents in favour of any action that can deal with the waste immediately, even encapsulation.

But Philippa Clark has warned residents who support the concrete bunker proposal that it will not ensure the safety of their homes or safeguard property values.

She urged them to fight the proposal as a matter of principal as well as safety.

"There is no precedent for encapsulation for radio active waste in a residential area, none at all," she said.

"This is clearly a political decision from the state government which does not want the waste removed to the proper facility at Kemps Creek because that location is in a marginal seat (Mulgoa) held by the government."

Hunters Hill Mayor Mark Bennett said he was not informed of the decision by either Mr Dominello or Mr Roberts.

"We should have been consulted and although I think the government's intention is to do something as soon as possible, it has certainly divided the community."

The Chair of the Hunters Hill Environment Action Group, John Atkin, said several Nelson Parade residents are pleased the government has finally taken action after half a century of neglect.

"News of the decision to move to detailed design has

prompted mixed responses from the local residents and community," he said

"Although the Nelson Parade Action Group has consistently advocated for total removal of all contaminated material, a number of the residents living closest to the site have welcomed Property NSW's decision as a step forward in resolving the 40 year impasse over the site.

"But given the mixed response from residents it will be interesting to see how this issue plays out in the coming months."

Philippa Clark stressed that the Nelson Parade residents who support encapsulation do not represent the views of residents across Hunters Hill.

"The majority of residents, the vast majority, are very disappointed," she said.

Mr Atkin said some waste will be removed, thanks to pressure from The Weekly Times.

"Following the campaign supported by The Weekly Times, the hydro carbons and heavy metal contaminants on the Parramatta

River foreshore block which is the subject of a clean-up order from the EPA and will be treated and disposed of at a licensed facility off site but the soil impacted by the low-level radioactive waste will be encapsulated in a cell on site.

Mr Atkins conceded that issue is a political one.

"Our local politicians are closely involved, with Victor Dominello as the Minister for Property who has signed off on the latest decision," he said.

"Nelson Parade is also within the Lane Cove electorate of Anthony Roberts MP, Minister for Planning and Environment.

"Jerome Laxale is Mayor of Ryde and the Labor candidate opposing Victor Dominello at next year's State election, is the Chair of the Parramatta River Catchment Group which is committed to cleaning up the contamination the old industrial sites along the river like Nelson Parade."

No date time frame has been given for the encapsulation, which was announced this week.