



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

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NUCLEAR ENERGY

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (5.02 pm): The hypocrisy of the Labor Party which licensed a facility in Narangba that uses radioactive materials takes my breath away. When I raised this issue in this parliament the Labor Party patted the then health minister on the back and said, 'Fine, we like what you are doing, Wendy. Go for it.' Those opposite ignored the fact that this facility was being licensed by a Labor government without any provisions for public liability insurance in case there was ever a spill or radioactive material emanated from that facility.

How timely it is to remind this House about the need for accountability in terms of the use of radioactive and other toxic materials. The Labor Party has no track record of honour. We have seen that with regard to the toxic chemical spill at Narangba. Once again, if that facility had been subject to the proper checks and balances and put nowhere near residential areas we would not be seeing the tragedy that is unfolding today.

When I hear Labor Party members say that they are trying to look after the battlers and the residents who are worried about potentially toxic materials being located near their residential areas, I say that they have no credibility. The community of Narangba is still very angry about the toxic materials that are spilling into the local community. The government is expecting the taxpayers to pick up the bill for that.

How can we trust the Labor Party in terms of the existing storage and transportation of radioactive waste in Queensland. We cannot trust them. Not much has changed under the Beattie Labor government since former health minister Wendy Edmond's appalling performance to remove the government's auditing of radiation safety compliance from public scrutiny. This used to be a performance indicator in the Health portfolio's Ministerial Portfolio Statement until Wendy Edmond removed it.

As the leader of the coalition, Lawrence Springborg, outlined, the Beattie Labor government does not have a very good track record in the area of scrutiny and monitoring existing radioactive storage and transportation in Queensland. It is time that there was accountability not just for the private sector but also for the government, which is a major user of radioactive material in Queensland. Who is keeping the Queensland government honest about its use of existing radioactive material and how it is storing existing material? Guess what? The Queensland government monitors itself. That is, quite frankly, not good enough. That is why the state coalition is proposing to the House a very timely amendment to make accountability for monitoring and scrutiny the responsibility of an independent radiation safety inspectorate that would report to this parliament and not to this Queensland government, which as we have seen in the past, cannot be trusted.

The Queensland government is a major user of radioactive material. It happens now. Labor members are a pack of hypocrites. The state coalition has previously criticised this Labor government's lack of accountability with regard to the storage and transportation of radioactive material. Higher levels of accountability, scrutiny and monitoring of existing radioactive materials must occur in this state. That is why we are proposing that an independent radiation safety inspectorate report to this parliament.

I also want to put on record that I have never been accused of being quiet before. I was on the record with Mark McArdle, before the state government was, saying that there is no way we would have a

nuclear plant on the Sunshine Coast. The left wing brains trust that suggested that are in fact brainless. We know from the experience of the toxic waste dump that was created at Narangba—thanks to a Labor government—that we should not put facilities like this near residential areas.

This Labor government has a very poor track record when it comes to existing toxic, noxious industries in residential areas. The taxpayers are picking up the bill. The poor old residents in the existing area of Narangba are now having to pay the price with their health. One Labor member of this parliament has had a very strong family interest in that industrial estate. The fact that it has been established in a residential area and that the people of Narangba are paying the price is a shame. I am quite amazed that the Labor members of this House have not said something about this. They are not standing up for these people. We should not put these industries near residential areas.

Radioactive material exists in Queensland. It is being used extensively by the Queensland government, particularly in Queensland Health. We just do not trust this government in terms of how it is monitoring it. We would not trust the Labor government to monitor itself after we had the Dr Patel scandal and we have seen how it monitors quality; Queenslanders lose out. It is time for independence. It is time for accountability. I would like to see Labor members vote in favour of this accountability measure and put this inspectorate before the parliament so that there is accountability and monitoring and none of the secret Labor Party deals behind closed doors.