

The Advertiser



📷 Members of the first citizens' jury talk to Premier Jay Weatherill before handing over their report.

SA Nuclear

SA's nuclear debate: How the citizens' jury will work

Daniel Wills, State Political Editor, The Advertiser

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- [NUCLEAR DOSSIER SPECIAL REPORT: Everything you need to know about SA's nuclear debate](#)

A GROUP of average South Australians selected as a representative cross-section of the community will have a major say in the decision about a possible nuclear future for SA.

As the State Government prepares to give its formal position to Parliament by the end of the year, Premier Jay Weatherill has called two citizens' juries to consider the issue.

In May, Mr Weatherill outlined a six-step process aimed at ensuring as many people as possible were included in the decision and given information needed to make a sober

judgment.

Invitations were first sent to 25,000 randomly selected South Australians, and whittled down to 54 people to sit on the first jury.

It identified key questions from the Royal Commission which need deeper examination, laying the groundwork for a statewide consultation now underway.

Among its key findings was a call for deeper analysis of the business case underpinning the development of a nuclear dump, which the Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission found could deliver revenues to the state of about \$5 billion per year and total profits of \$100 billion.

The Royal Commission itself examined the size of existing national funds for the future storage of waste, but suggested the state also hold direct meetings with potential international customers.

Their findings will go to a second jury of 350 people, who will also consider the outcome of statewide community consultation and give a final report to Mr Weatherill.

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Nuclear science - how does radiation affect us?

The first jury report stated it was critical the public be confident in an independent and transparent regulator that would oversee the safety of a future nuclear industry.

Some jurors called for more detail on the route that waste would take to arrive in SA.

The report said such a facility “has the potential to provide a significant income for SA”.

“There are risks and uncertainties with this endeavour that still requires more research,” the jury warned.

“There is the possibility that further research may determine this project is not viable.”

On receiving the report, Mr Weatherill told the first jury that the recent federal election showed a scepticism with the way politics was being managed and that people wanted more of a direct say.

“If this election spoke to anything, it’s a bit of doubts about our democracy,” Mr Weatherill said.

“What we’re trying to do, I think, is to reform our democracy. This is a big experiment.

“What you seem to have done is you’ve come to a set of conclusions about the way forward.”

Opposition Leader Steven Marshall said the Government had “outsourced probably the most important decision in the history of the state to a citizens’ jury”.

“A citizens’ jury gave us cycling on footpaths here in SA,” Mr Marshall said.

“We don’t think this is the right methodology for a decision as significant as a nuclear waste repository.”



📷 Emily Callander was on the first citizens’ jury. Picture: Matt Turner

WHAT I LEARNED ON THE CITIZENS’ JURY

By Emily Callander

AFTER two weekends and four days of intense deliberation, I have now emerged from the start of one of the biggest conversations I have ever been involved in. It was exciting, it was exhausting and it is far from over.

I was one of 52 South Australians randomly selected to attend a citizens' jury on the Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission report. We were tasked with creating a guide to the report that highlights those parts that every South Australian needs to discuss.

I was given a copy of the report in full and invited to read as much or as little as I wanted based on my personal interest.

The word "nuclear" is enough to spark emotion and we as a jury were being asked to discuss a report recommending among other things, the storage of imported used nuclear fuel (high-level waste) somewhere in South Australia.

I entered this process with an open mind and no preconceived notions of the nuclear fuel cycle other than from old news and pop culture.

However, I quickly became aware of the significance of this topic when we bypassed a protest to enter the venue, then walked into a room full of cameras, microphones and reporters.

The jury was made up of people from all aspects of the population and we were in no way in complete agreement on anything. Despite this, I have learned that the conversation surrounding such an emotive topic can be respectful and that agreeing to disagree can be valuable so long as we are given the space to voice all opinions.

I have learned more about the nuclear fuel cycle than I ever thought I needed to know but what is more, I have learned the value of the fundamental question we were asked — what do all South Australians need to discuss?

It is overwhelmingly clear that any decisions surrounding a topic like this cannot be made without public engagement, nor should they be.

I have walked out of these deliberations confident that my voice was heard. I have great respect for the contributions of my fellow jurors and I am humbled by their passion and dedication to this process.

This is a discussion that could be continuing for decades and its impacts might affect many future generations. This is democracy in action and I have a voice.

Can I live with that? Yes. And I am proud to say that I can.

Emily Callander, member of Citizens' Jury 1



Stanley, Shane, Khatija and Jenny were all part of the first citizens' jury. Picture: Matt Turner

FOUR OTHER VIEWS FROM THE CITIZENS' JURY

Stanley, 35, software engineer, Torrensville

I come from a technical background, so learning about the way that the storage capsules are made and how they interact with the host environment was fascinating. Hearing about how we failed with the clean-up at Maralinga, and the profound effect that has had on indigenous people, was heartbreaking. I used to see the arguments around nuclear in terms of fear versus science, but now I see it more in terms of trust — can we trust the people involved to hold themselves to the high standards that are needed here?

Shane, 58, retired, Brompton

I was impressed how 50 people from different backgrounds and with different views on the nuclear industry can still find common ground that can be agreed upon, even if that is not their preferred opinion. Key learnings would be the huge volume of used fuel currently being stored above ground around the world and in particular North Asia, and the fact that at some point in time, according to the key scientists, this must be disposed of underground.

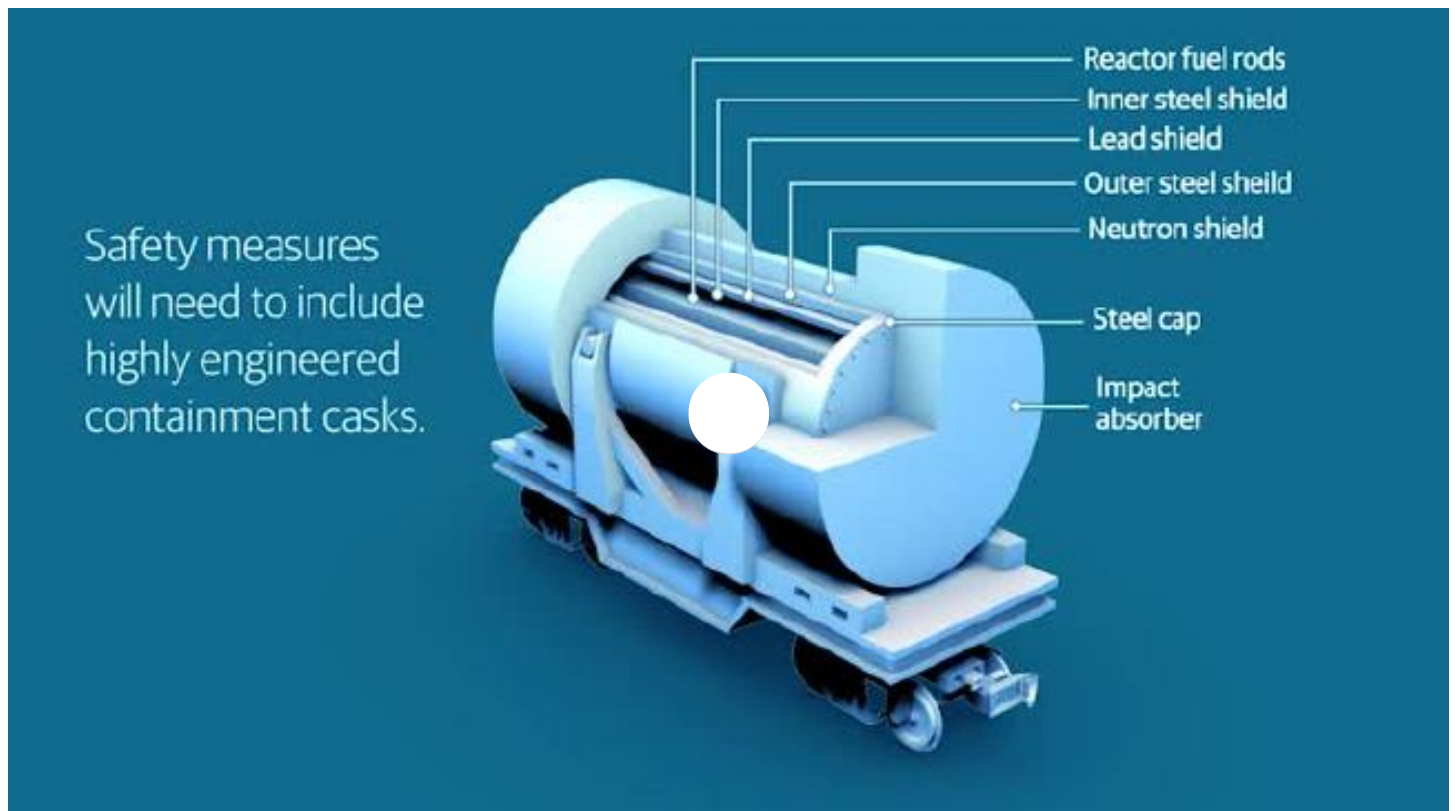
Khatija, 38, self-employed, Adelaide

I put myself forward for the jury because I believe I had an experience as a Kokatha person that I wanted to share, plus I really wanted to challenge my own thinking about the nuclear industry. I also wanted to be a part of a process of engaging the public that was new to our state. I do think my opinion has shifted — not in a yes or no sense — but I have gained a

deeper understanding or insight into my own process and culture and how I want to get involved in a decision-making process. I also hope that my experiences of this process will help partly how other Aboriginal people may choose to participate in this important process.

Jenny, 56, screen printer, Port Augusta

I had attended the Royal Commission's information sessions in Port Augusta and felt the strong sentiment of the room, which was not being considered in the writing of their report. The citizens' jury process gave us a lot of latitude to learn from witnesses we chose, as well as staff of the royal commission. Under this analysis it appears that the commissioner and his team prepared a very thorough report which covers the technical issues of safety and economics and recommends those activities the commissioner believes are feasible. However, in the end it remains for South Australians to be actively engaged in the question — do we want this in our state?



Nuclear waste - how is it transported?
