

Comments by J.A.L. Robertson

on “Social Issues ...” by Mark Stevenson

[All page numbers refer to the Adobe Acrobat Reader version from the NWMO website.]

Mark Stevenson, in the Executive Summary, claims that his document “*provides a comprehensive listing of the social issues related to the concept of deep geological disposal*”. In fact, what it lists are not “issues”, and it is not comprehensive. An issue, by dictionary and usage, is a topic for debate. A debate requires two or more points of view: objections to the proposition do not constitute a debate. Stevenson’s redefining “issues” in exclusively negative terms as “*failures, defects and/or deficiencies*” (p.9) is unjustified and unjustifiable.

His document, therefore, does not identify the issues involved in nuclear waste management. At best, his section headings represent shorthand identifiers of some issues. An issue should be worded either as a proposition or a question. The elaborations under the headings are not issues but allegations, accusations or concerns.

Even by Stevenson’s own improper definition they do not qualify as “issues” since “*No attempt was made to (establish) factual correctness or accuracy*” (p.120): they are only *alleged* failures, etc.. There is nothing in 122 pages to inform readers that virtually all of these so-called “issues” were challenged and/or refuted in the Environmental Impact Statement or in submissions to the Blair Seaborn (BS) Panel. The paper fails to mention the issues raised by proponents of nuclear energy in their submissions. The paper is therefore not comprehensive.

The document is further misleading in dividing Panel participants between “typical” individuals who expressed concerns and official bodies (p.9). As an individual who supported the concept and who challenged many of the concerns as being based on erroneous or misleading beliefs, I object to this oversimplification as another example of bias

The link to Stevenson’s biography yields no credentials for his undertaking this task: only his affiliation to an organization for which no credentials are provided either.

Since this paper does not address its stated purpose it should be withdrawn from the NWMO website.

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