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SUBMISSION TO THE INQUIRY INTO NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERATION AND DISARMAMENT

Terms of Reference

- The international treaties involving Australia which relate to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.
- How these treaties advance Australia's objectives in this field.
- How the treaties might be made more comprehensive or effective.
- How inter-parliamentary action can assist in strengthening treaty-based aspects of the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime.
- How the Committee and the Parliament can contribute to the work of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament.

Australian uranium exports contribute unacceptable risks to nuclear weapons proliferation.

Greenpeace recommends that Australia must act to phase out all uranium mining and export due to its contribution to the unacceptable risk in the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Most importantly Australia must act immediately to cease uranium export agreements with any country that has nuclear weapons or is not a signatory to the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Uranium is the only energy source with a direct connection to nuclear weapons proliferation.

Greenpeace's position is that to achieve total and sustained global nuclear disarmament nuclear power must be permanently phased out. The materials and capacity to produce nuclear power are undeniably and intrinsically linked to the capacity and materials used for the production of nuclear weapons.

Any government which has the material, facilities and expertise to enrich uranium to reactor-grade has everything it needs to further enrich uranium to weapons grade. This is the basis for current concerns about Iran's nuclear program.

The second most proliferation sensitive part of the nuclear fuel chain is reprocessing plutonium from spent reactor fuel. Nuclear programs based on reprocessing plutonium from spent fuel have dramatically increased the risk of proliferation as the creation of more plutonium means more nuclear waste which in turn means more materials available for the creation of nuclear weapons and dirty bombs.

The NPT Article IV 'inalienable right' of states to pursue essentially all aspects of the nuclear fuel chain short of building weapons is not compatible with a nuclear weapons free world.

The International community as a whole and several key states in particular, must grapple with the need to resolve the contradiction at the heart of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty - the claim that nuclear energy is an "inalienable right". The "inalienable right" to nuclear energy is a historical and political mistake; the only legitimate right is to clean and safe energy. Nuclear energy is neither. The world has witnessed the acquisition of nuclear weapons capabilities through so-called peaceful civilian nuclear programmes in India, Israel and Pakistan, and attempts made in many countries, including North Korea and Iraq.

Nuclear technology will always carry the risk that it will be used to construct nuclear weapons. Every state that has a nuclear power capability, has the means to obtain nuclear material usable in a nuclear weapon. Many nations that have active commercial nuclear power programs, began their research with two objectives - electricity generation and the option to develop nuclear weapons.

In 2006 Al Gore stated,

> *"For eight years in the White House, every weapons-proliferation problem we dealt with was connected to a civilian reactor program. And if we ever got to the point where we wanted to use nuclear reactors to back out a lot of coal ... then we'd have to put them in so many places we'd run that proliferation risk right off the reasonability scale."*[1]

Every state that has nuclear power capability, has nuclear weapons capability. Out of the current 44 nuclear power states, we could potentially have 44 nuclear weapons states.

Dr. Mohamed El Baradei, the Director General of the IAEA said:

> *"Should a state with a fully developed fuel-cycle capability decide, for whatever reason, to break away from its non-proliferation commitments, most experts believe it could produce a nuclear weapon within a matter of months."*

Australia exports uranium to countries with unacceptable proliferation and disarmament records.

Australia has uranium export agreements with:

- countries blocking progress on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (e.g. the USA) and the proposed Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty.
- four of the 'declared' nuclear weapons states (USA, UK, China, France) - none of these states comply with their disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT);
- countries with a history of weapons-related research based on their civil nuclear programs (such as South Korea and Taiwan)

The government has been assessing uranium sales to Russia even though there have been no IAEA safeguards inspections in Russia since 2001; incidents of theft from Russian nuclear sites are common; and Russia is in violation of its disarmament obligations under the NPT.

Greenpeace is also deeply concerned about other aspects of nuclear power.

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[1] *Guardian Weekly 2006(25):17-8 (9 June 2006)*

Climate change
The nuclear industry has seized on the problem of climate change to try to revive its industry. It argues that nuclear power can help achieve the dramatic cut in carbon emissions necessary to seriously address climate change, but the reality is that wasting yet more time and money pursuing nuclear technology would be too late, too expensive, too risky, and could lead to nuclear weapons proliferation. The massive subsidies needed by the nuclear industry threaten to undermine the renewable energy revolution that is the real solution to climate change.

As compared to nuclear energy, renewable energy does not involve the risks and significant costs associated with fuel enrichment, fabrication and reprocessing of nuclear power. Renewable energy generation has zero emissions and few waste disposal issues. Renewable energy does not contribute to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, nor does it pose a risk to national security.

Renewable energy will not take years to establish, the technologies are ready and proven. Renewable energy can provide cheaper electricity than that provided by nuclear power

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (and other studies) estimate that for nuclear power to have any effect on global warming, a minimum of 1,000 reactors would need to be built worldwide. This is a wildly unrealistic scenario, given that the current growth in nuclear electricity is at about 4%. [2]

The promotion of nuclear power as the answer to climate change is a dangerous diversion from the real solutions: a massive uptake of renewable energy and the adoption of energy efficiency are the only effective ways to combat climate change. They are available now; they are clean, cheap and have the added benefit of providing energy security.

Waste
After half a century of producing deadly long-lived radioactive waste, not one country in the world has a method of isolating these wastes from the environment for the hundreds of thousands of years they will remain a threat. Monitoring and maintaining waste dumps over a period spanning 20 times the length of known civilisation is an unacceptable burden to place on future generations – with no guarantees of long-term safety.

Safety
Time and time again the nuclear industry has demonstrated that safety and nuclear power is a contradiction in terms. Safe reactors are a myth. An accident can occur in any nuclear reactor, causing the release of large quantities of deadly radiation into the environment. Even during normal operations radioactive materials are regularly discharged into the air and water. The policy of secrecy, which surrounded the development of the atom bomb, was transferred to civil nuclear power projects after World War II and lives on today.

The nuclear industy was suffering serious nuclear accidents long before the catastrophic Chernobyl accident in 1986. Twenty-two years later the industry is plagued with incidents, accidents and near-misses.

Terrorism
In addition to the risk of accident, nuclear plants are highly vulnerable to deliberate

[2] (http://www.greenpeace.org/international/campaigns/nuclear climate change - nuclear not the answer briefing

acts of sabotage and terrorist attack. Even the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which promotes the use of nuclear power, admitted that in the light of the September 11th 2001 attacks in New York that:

> *"Most nuclear power plants were built during the 1960s and 1970s, and like the World Trade Center, they were designed to withstand only accidental impacts from the small 'Cessna' type sports aircraft. If you postulate the risk of a jumbo jet full of fuel, it is clear that their design was not conceived to withstand such an impact."*

Australia should reject the use of nuclear weapons in our defence.

Some of Australia's recent diplomatic efforts towards nuclear disarmament have been commendable, however these efforts are highly compromised by continuing to shelter under the United States' nuclear umbrella. This agreement increases the likelihood of Australia being a target of a nuclear weapons attack. Australian facilities or personnel should not contribute to any possible use of nuclear weapons.

Australia must reject nuclear weapons in its defence. In doing so, it will raise its international profile and credibility on disarmament and place the most effective political pressure on the United States and other nuclear weapons states. It will assist to delegitimise the use of these genocidal and ecocidal weapons and the military policies that support them.

Australians polled by Roy Morgan Research Co. in 1998 agreed, "Australia should help negotiate a global treaty to ban and destroy all nuclear weapons."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- A Nuclear Weapons Convention is a clear path to disarmament, and Australia must advocate for commencement of negotiations towards a Convention. The International Commission on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament provides a key opportunity to promote a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

- Australia must give immediate and top priority to rapidly expanding renewable energy, energy efficiency and reducing energy demand to achieve the deep cuts in emissions that are required to prevent dangerous climate change.

- Australia must review its uranium export agreements and act to phase out uranium mining in light of nuclear weapons proliferation risks.

- Australian treaties should not allow use of Australian facilities in the US Missile Defence or nuclear weapons programs. Australia should explore ways to denuclearise its military alliances and not provide facilities or personnel for, or otherwise be complicit in, any possible use of nuclear weapons.

- Australia must encourage the ratification of key treaties. The most essential is gaining the outstanding signatures needed to bring the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty into force. Support of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone treaties by Nuclear Weapon States is also vital.

- As per the recommendations of the UN Expert Group on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education the Government must actively support peace and

promote disarmament education in schools and universities as well as the broader community.

- Australia should withdraw participation from the US Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, which envisages extensive spent fuel reprocessing; and separation, transport and use of vastly increased amounts of plutonium.

- Any research and development on uranium enrichment still being undertaken at Lucas Heights or anywhere else in Australia should be shut down.

- Strengthening of the capacity of government departments in non-proliferation and disarmament.

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