

## **SUBMISSION TO CASE STUDY OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF AUSTRALIAN URANIUM RESOURCES**

I am opposed to the export of Australia's uranium for 3 reasons:

1. the contribution this makes to the proliferation of nuclear weapons.
2. the contribution this makes to an increased threat of nuclear terrorism.
3. the negative consequences to the world environment both in terms of greenhouse gas emissions and pollution of the environment with nuclear waste (plus the effect of nuclear accidents and emission of radioactive material).

The nuclear power industry is inextricably linked to the development of and proliferation of nuclear weapons. Australian uranium has helped to generate large stockpiles of plutonium, a prime fuel for nuclear weapons eg in Japan. Japan could manufacture nuclear weapons in the near future if they have not secretly already done so. They are likely to do so if tensions in the region escalate. It is not true that reactor grade plutonium cannot be used in nuclear weapons and it is also easy to enrich this plutonium further. Australian uranium is likely to have been used to create enriched uranium in South Korea and in North Korea. Uranium sales to China will fuel their expanding nuclear weapons arsenal, both directly and by freeing up other supplies within China for use in nuclear weapons. We are fuelling a new nuclear arms race.

Australian safeguards have been watered down for commercial considerations and are ineffective. They are a book-keeping exercise which does not ensure that our uranium does not physically end up in nuclear weapons. It is impossible to keep track our uranium through the nuclear fuel cycle once it leaves our shores. It is unrealistic to believe that material derived from our uranium has not been diverted into nuclear weapons and will not be so in the future.

The increased amounts of nuclear material circulating in the world as a result of our uranium exports increases the chances of terrorists acquiring nuclear material.

The nuclear industry is not the solution to greenhouse gas emissions. The resources poured into trying to expand a nuclear power industry can be used much more effectively to develop other non-polluting and sustainable energy sources and on energy efficiency. The development of nuclear power itself involves the production of a large amount of greenhouse gases. It is a non-efficient path to reducing greenhouse gases. The same resources can be used much more efficiently to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by a much larger amount.

The nuclear industry creates a world-wide unsolved problem of accumulating nuclear waste. The consequences of accidents and the danger of terrorist attack of nuclear facilities plus the acquiring by terrorists of nuclear material make this industry a blight on the world.

Australia is already contributing to all these negative consequences of the nuclear industry through the export of its uranium. Expansion of our uranium exports would make Australia one of the major causes of all these world-wide problems and should therefore not proceed.

Colin Mitchell