

Submission to the Standing Committee on Industry and Resource Inquiry on the Strategic Value of Non Fossil Fuel Resources, 2005.

As concerned members of the public, we wish to draw the following concerns regarding the exploitation of Australia's Uranium resources to the committee's attention:

- We are deeply concerned by the lack of any available mechanism whereby the ultimate destination of uranium exported overseas can be traced. Even when used peaceably, nuclear power produces plutonium as a waste product. This is the raw material of nuclear weapons. The possibility of Australian uranium being used for nuclear weapons of any form is chilling.
- We wish to draw your attention to the grave issues of environmental damage from uranium mining, especially the ongoing consequences of ISL mining, including the insertion of large amounts of cyanide into major aquifers.
- We also wish to draw your attention to the safety of workers in uranium mines, particularly the lack of any national tracking system of claims of injury or illness by workers in this sector.
- We would have you seriously consider the complicated issues of indigenous land ownership, indigenous poverty, and the unequal bargaining power of uranium extraction companies in negotiating access to potential uranium sources in indigenous land.
- We ask you to consider the potential for catastrophic human or technical error in the extraction and transportation of radioactive material, and in the production of nuclear power.
- We strongly suggest that the development of genuinely renewable, non-fossil fuel resources, such as solar and wind power, could more safely contribute to the reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions. We would like to point out that uranium deposits, like fossil fuel supplies, are finite, and will eventually run out.
- We would further like to state that I think the issue of waste management is inextricable from that of uranium supply. There are currently no adequate processes for the treatment, disposal, or containment of nuclear waste. Uranium should not be mined further until there is a valid solution for long term, safe, storage of nuclear waste.
- Finally, we would like to express our concern at the absence of Inquiry hearings from Alice Springs or the Central Australian region. There are many pressing issues of uranium mining, exploration, and waste disposal currently affecting our region. Local land holders, residents, traditional owners, and workers have many concerns to express regarding these issues. We are disappointed that the inquiry prefers to hear from corporate interests, at a distant remove from the sites of actual impact.

Thank you.

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