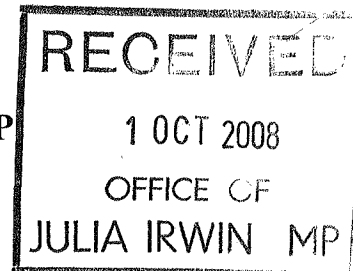




**THE HON MARTIN FERGUSON AM MP**  
**MINISTER FOR RESOURCES AND ENERGY**  
**MINISTER FOR TOURISM**



PO BOX 6022  
PARLIAMENT HOUSE  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

**25 SEP 2008**

Ms Julia Irwin MP  
Chair  
House of Representatives  
Standing Committee on Petitions  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Ms Irwin *Julia*

Thank you for your letter of 4 September 2008 concerning a petition in relation to the proposed expansion of the Olympic Dam mine.

As highlighted by my colleague the Hon Peter Garrett AM MP, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the proposed expansion of the Olympic Dam mine requires approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC). Minister Garrett has also stated that there is an opportunity for the petitioners to comment on the proposed expansion during the public comment period after BHP Billiton has released its Environmental Impact Statement. This is a comprehensive process which will take account of all the environmental, social and economic impacts of the proposed expansion of the mine.

The Government's policy on uranium mining ensures that uranium mining occurs only under stringent controls, including world's best practice environmental, health and safety standards. The Government is also strongly committed to ensuring that Australian uranium is only used for peaceful purposes. We will only allow the export of uranium to countries that observe the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and with which we have a bilateral safeguards agreement.

As the world's second largest producer and exporter of uranium, Australia has a leadership role in ensuring the sustainable development and responsible use of this important energy resource.

I too would encourage the petitioners to take advantage of the public comment period through the formal review process under the EPBC Act to express any concerns they may have with the project.

Thank you for bringing this petition to my attention.

Yours sincerely

Martin Ferguson