

Rosalind Byass
10 June 2008.

Mr James Rees
Committee Secretary
Parliament House
Canberra. ACT. 2600.

Submission regarding AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF
AUSTRALIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ON
COOPERATION IN
THE USE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES.

My first and main point is to question the purpose of such an agreement.

The documentation reminds us that the agreement will 'enhance Australia's commercial position as a supplier of an important energy resource commodity'. I do not accept this as a reasonable argument for the following reasons.

- Since the agreement was drawn up in September 2007 global problems have highlighted the necessity for mankind to rethink reliance on energy intensive industry.
- It is clear that greenhouse gas emissions are compounding global weather patterns. The outcomes are unpredictable however the likelihood of political ramifications need not be emphasized.
- For Russia to build another 40 Nuclear power plants is not going to cut emissions in the short term. With the construction of any nuclear power plant unacceptable amounts of fossil fuel usage is necessary.
- If successfully completed the extra plants will simply spell a business as usual message and facilitate continued overconsumption of energy.
- We cannot escape from the fickleness of international relations. Russia has Memorandums of Understanding with countries not on Australia's favoured nation status list. Diplomacy is not the safest criteria for AONM safeguards to be enacted. It is fanciful if not delusional to suppose that any imposed safeguards will be honoured if peace breaks down. Australia can only reprimand diplomatically if the treaty is not honoured. Is this in Australia's best interest?
- **Chernobyl:** -Are the safety standards of compliance with the consumption of Australia's uranium realistic? Are our diplomats seeking effective guarantees?
- Australia is sending a quite ambiguous message to the rest of the world. I.e. expand the nuclear industry facilitating the production of waste product able to be further processed into plutonium or depleted uranium for the benefit of the mining industry only. Yet we are calling for restarting the nuclear non proliferation push. (P1 the Age 10.6.08).
- Russia is currently all but self sufficient with its domestic uranium supply. It seems clear that importing uranium from Australia or elsewhere no matter what AONM tags we put on it to ensure it is not used in warfare, Russia will be able to use its domestic supply for other deterrent or hostile purposes.

- **Indigenous Australian:** Continuing to expand the uranium mining industry is further compromising the Indigenous Australians who still have moral obligations to protect their land. Mining companies and government may have met legal criteria with appropriate indigenous elder's signatures; however we all know that this is not sufficient to give proper consent for the duration of the life of the radioactive material.

One of my most profound memories is that of an Aboriginal elder saying that he feels so bad in his heart that his earth "might have been the cause of cancer for people far away". **It is time for all Australians to take on this spirit of caring for the land.**

It is time to put Australia's money where our mouth is and invest in sustainable living and consumption. Russia of all countries should be aware of Cuba which has passed peak oil yet is functioning quite reasonably. Australia is in a position where we can lead by example, sacrifice the easy market profits and put the wellbeing of human-beings first. Whether the source be fossil fuel, nuclear, animal, or plant driven it is necessary for humans to drastically cut energy consumption.