

To the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties

**RE: Parliamentary Inquiry into Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament**

I would like to ask the Joint Standing committee to recommend that the Australian Government cancel all of Australia's uranium export treaties for a number of reasons including the problematic issue of nuclear waste, the high demand on water resources, the impacts on human health, the potential for weapons proliferation, the dangers associated with transport and the ineffectuality of Australia's safeguards arrangements to effectively monitor and account for Australian uranium.

There is an undeniable link between countries with civil nuclear power programs who also have nuclear weapons program, there is I believe a responsibility and duty of care that Australia has under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty not to supply uranium to any country with a nuclear weapons program whether they be party to the NNPT or not.

Under the International Atomic Energy Agency IAEA Safeguards, they 'ensure' that Australian Obligated Nuclear Materials AONM will not be used in nuclear weapons. The IAEA has no authority or jurisdiction or even capacity to check on the world's uranium stockpiles. In addition there are no Australian inspections of AONM and therefore rely solely on the IAEA who at best have the capacity to detect a diversion of nuclear material after the event.

The Australian Safeguards and Non-proliferation Office ASNO have conceded that, "Every year inventory reports involving bulk material will include a component of Material Unaccounted For MUF."

This discrepancy in the inventory of nuclear material clearly provides a loophole for diversion of nuclear material, rendering IAEA inspections useless if in fact they carry out inspections at all. Australia does not require that all nuclear facilities processing AONM be subject to IAEA safeguards at all. While all AONM is supposed to be subject to IAEA safeguards, yet ANSO makes exceptions. ANSO has failed to provide relevant information to the Committee in the past, and is notoriously dishonest and unprofessional. There are unacceptable breakdowns and severe limitations in the organisations that exist to implement safeguards on the nuclear industry.

Australia's uranium has resulted in the production of over 114 tonnes of plutonium - sufficient for over 11,000 nuclear weapons. If just 0.1% of this plutonium is written off as Material Unaccounted For, that is sufficient for 11 plutonium bombs similar to the bombs, which destroyed Nagasaki. Government agencies refuse to release MUF figures; for plutonium, it may well be significantly greater than 0.1%.

I co produce and present the Radioactive Show on 3cr Community Radio in Melbourne, in which I interview many individuals who have been affected by nuclear weapons and or from working in Australian uranium mines. I urge you to consider that there are real victims of the nuclear industry, from Indigenous communities to Defence force personal,

workers in uranium mines and processing plants and that any breakdown of safeguards and limitations in capacity is not acceptable. In a recent documentary on Australia's nuclear industry revealed Australia's ignorance to what uranium actually is. It is outrageous to potentially expose Australians to the risk associated with uranium and implicates us in the sale of uranium to countries with weapons programs, when many people don't even know what uranium is let alone the health risks of being exposed to nuclear material.

I call on the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties to recommend that the Australian government address the limited capacity of ASNO and the IAEA to monitor the AONM offshore and inability to prevent production of nuclear weapons from Australian uranium. Further I ask that the JSCT would recommend to cancel all uranium exports treaties and agreements, and re evaluate the net benefits and net negative environmental, financial and social impacts of Australia being engaged in the nuclear cycle at all.

With much hope for the future

Mia Pepper  
Radioactive Show 3cr: 855am