

**Joint Standing Committee on Treaties  
Submission to the Inquiry into Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament**

**By: James Cocking**

The Rudd Government must decide whether it is actually for the abolition of nuclear weapons, maintaining the *status quo* or contributing to a potentially dangerous nuclear future through the relatively unrestricted sale of uranium to international customers. The recent election of Barack Obama as the President of the United States and his recent comments has suggested a willingness to work towards reducing the nuclear threat. This gives me some hope that we could collectively move towards the complete abolishment of nuclear weapons. However, the Rudd Government's willingness to sell uranium to global customers undermines this whole process. Exploring for, mining of and selling of uranium to international customers increases the nuclear threat. Providing the raw material for nuclear weapons while claiming to be working towards reducing the nuclear threat is a contradiction of monumental proportions.

Uranium is not an answer to climate change. The expansion of Australia's uranium exports does nothing to reduce the impacts of climate change or any nuclear threat. It does nothing but create the conditions possible for an all out nuclear weapon expansion and possible nuclear conflict. The Rudd Government must decide whether it will actually work towards a meaningful nuclear disarmament, where no uranium mining is considered until at least all recognised and non-recognised nuclear states dismantle all nuclear weapons or; continue to pay lip service to nuclear disarmament but contribute to the nuclear threat by providing the material to make nuclear weapons under the guise of reducing atmospheric carbon.

We are at the crossroads where we can work together towards a more peaceful, prosperous and just society by investing in and supporting renewable energy technologies globally or; we can continue to spiral towards the unknown, where our vulnerabilities are governed by climate change, the global financial crisis and where our uranium ends up. If the Rudd Government is committed to nuclear disarmament then it must consider not selling uranium to any customer until all nuclear weapons are dismantled globally. This will require diplomatic efforts with recognised, unrecognised and potential nuclear states to disarm while working together with current uranium vending states to halt the export of uranium.

I welcome the Rudd Government's astuteness to consider addressing this complex and highly important issue. However, unless there is commitment towards reducing the amount of potential nuclear fuel on the market through uranium exports, the threat of nuclear weapons will always persist.

'A world hooked on fossil fuels has brought about climate change, a world going nuclear is not going to change that.'