

Nuclear Energy

AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRATS ACTION PLAN
NUCLEAR ENERGY, URANIUM MINING & NUCLEAR NON PROLIFERATION
ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE

The Democrats position on nuclear industries has been virtually unchanged for 30 years: we want a clean Australia free from uranium mining, nuclear reactors and radioactive waste. We do so to protect human health and our environment from the hazards of the uranium fuel cycle and from contributing to nuclear weapons proliferation.

Our Action Plan

"The use of a nuclear weapon against a state without nuclear weapons is patently immoral. Use against a state with nuclear weapons is also suicidal. These weapons have no value against terrorists or criminals. Progress toward a safer future is not thwarted from a lack of practical threat-reducing policy options. The problem is lack of political will."

Statement by
7th World Summit of Nobel
Peace Prize Laureates
Nov 2006

- Cut greenhouse emissions through energy efficiency and renewable energy, and **reject nuclear power** as too costly and too slow and because it generates radioactive waste for which there is no known long term safe storage solution.
- Reject emphatically the **enrichment of uranium** in Australia.
- **Prohibit the sale of Australian uranium** to any country that has not ratified both the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (i.e. US, China, Israel, India, Pakistan & North Korea).
- **Close and rehabilitate** all of Australia's uranium mines.
- **Oppose the national radioactive waste dumps** proposed in outback NT and instead provide **safe, above ground facilities** in the states where warranted, located as close as possible to the site of generation.
- Reject any plan for Australia to accept overseas **nuclear waste** or spent Australian uranium.
- **Protect the integrity** of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act's prohibition of nuclear reactors or enrichment.
- **Promote total nuclear disarmament** under **Article 6 of the NPT**, which requires all parties to pursue good faith negotiations on disarmament. Press nuclear weapons states for legally binding, agreed timetables of verifiable, permanent destruction of all nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles.
- Support global initiatives to **prevent nuclear weapons modernisation** and to eliminate short range nuclear weapons designed to be forward-deployed.
- **Prohibit nuclear weapons** and nuclear powered vessels in Australian territory.
- **Withdraw from agreements** that contribute to the use of nuclear weapons, including the use of Australian bases, communication, logistics, and personnel.



Other ACTION PLANS are available online at
www.democrats.org.au

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- Support **nuclear free zones** in our own region and elsewhere.
- Back the global **Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty**.
- Ban the use of **depleted uranium** in Australia's armaments and equipment.

The Issues

The Prime Minister is determined to deliver a nuclear future for Australia. On 28 April 2007, the Prime Minister announced the Uranium strategy which commits Australia to the development of uranium mining and nuclear power. Howard is removing legislative barriers and over riding state legislative safeguards to achieve this. The Howard government is advocating a nuclear industry, without undertaking equivalent strategies for energy efficiency or renewable energy.

So without considering alternatives Howard has committed us to the regressive step of constructing 25 nuclear reactors. These 25 reactors would likely be sited along the coast in order to be close to urban electrical loads and water, each would become a de facto radioactive waste dump, in the cross hairs for terrorist attacks or at risk of Chernobyl like accident that could release catastrophic quantities of radioactivity.

The claim of near-zero greenhouse emissions were nuclear power's trump card, but it doesn't stack up and it comes down to economics. In 2004, small scale renewable and cogeneration technologies generated almost three times as much as nuclear and more in just 2004 than the world's nuclear industry will add from 2000 to 2010. Nuclear power is five to six times the cost of energy efficiency. It is estimated that the US could save three-quarters of the electricity it now uses. One percent energy efficiency in Australia will reduce the need for 8 coal fired power stations. By 2010 renewable and low-carbon sources will offer 177 times as much added capacity as nuclear. Overnight change from nuclear power to replace coal fired power stations would exhaust uranium reserves within 10 years.

Howard is mischievously promoting Nuclear Energy as clean, green and a climate change solution – when it is dirty, dangerous and a climate change liability. Howard's commitment to nuclear is about money and vested interests.

The global trend is clear. Action to reduce greenhouse emissions must be undertaken in the next ten years. Few new nuclear stations will be operating before 2020, and by the time these plants are even half-built, there will be enough low or no-carbon electricity available from non-nuclear sources to give investors in nuclear plants second thoughts.

Nuclear is dangerous and risky. The Siamese twins of nuclear power and proliferation of nuclear weapons can not be separated and there are better, safer and more economic options to address climate change and produce electricity.

The opportunity cost of subsidised investment for nuclear is investment in other climate-friendly technologies such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.



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