

## ... caring for the future and talking sense on **Nuclear Weapons**

Nuclear weapons pose a constant threat to international peace and security, and even to life as we know it. The nuclear weapon states – USA, Russia, UK, China and France – as well as India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea possess between them some 23,000 nuclear weapons. Thousands of these weapons are poised ready to strike within minutes of an order, or even accidentally.

Nuclear weapons are the most indiscriminate and destructive on Earth. No country is safe from the potentially devastating impacts of a nuclear exchange. This means that Australia cannot afford to stand by and do nothing to halt nuclear proliferation in states such as Iran and North Korea. We must also pressure those countries with nuclear weapons to disarm soon, irreversibly and verifiably. Not only is this a matter of holding states to their obligations, but it also reflects the views of the overwhelming majority of people across the world who want to see total nuclear disarmament happen soon.

The Labor government has talked about nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, but has not taken real action where it matters. During the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference in May 2010, Australia was notably inactive during discussions on securing total nuclear disarmament through the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention.

The Democrats, with a long history of action on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, can be the stimulus needed in the parliament to deliver responsible action. An immediate priority is for Australia to support the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention that would form the foundation for eventually eliminating all nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the Democrats would ensure that Australia is a key player in strengthening current measures for non-proliferation and disarmament, and in negotiating new ones where necessary.

### **Our Plan**

- To advocate at the United Nations and through other multilateral institutions for a **Nuclear Weapons Convention** with provisions for timely, irreversible and verifiable cuts in existing nuclear weapons arsenals and a definite deadline for total nuclear disarmament by 2025.
- To continue supporting multilateral efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation in **Iran** and **North Korea**
- To encourage States that have not signed and/or ratified the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty** to do so as soon as possible.
- To lead the way in negotiating a **Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty** that would ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons
- To encourage other states to accept the application of the **Additional Protocol** in order to strengthen and complement existing nuclear safeguards arrangements

