



WA Nuclear Free Alliance Conference Statement:
“We Can’t Close the Gap by Digging a Deeper Hole”

The Western Australia Nuclear Free Alliance (WANFA), made up of Aboriginal Traditional Land Owners from the Pilbara, the Kimberley, the Goldfields, the Great Victoria Desert, the Central Desert, the Gascoyne, Perth and the South West and their allies, met from 2-4 April 2011 on Noongar lands near Perth.

Since the beginning of time, Aboriginal people have been the proud custodians of our land Australia. Still today, with new technology, new ways and new friends, Aboriginal people continue looking after country. In Western Australia looking after country means preventing uranium mining.

Uranium mining is not like any other mining.

Uranium mining poisons water, land and life through releasing radiation. The mining industry and the government are trying to make people believe uranium mining is inevitable. The industry and the government are trying to make people believe it is safe. Both are trying to make people believe that uranium mining is the way to bring economic benefits. We Say No.

WANFA believes that the costs of uranium mining far outweigh any short term cash payment. We can’t close the gap by increasing the number of radioactive holes in the ground. Aboriginal people should not have to sacrifice the country of future generations, for basic health, education and infrastructure. There are far more jobs and opportunities in a conservation and culture economy, and in caring for country.

We have learnt from the experience of the Mirarr people who have paid the price of the Ranger uranium mine which routinely leaks radioactively contaminated water into Kakadu National Park. We have learnt from the hard lessons learned by the Arabunna, Kokatha and Spinifex people who have survived but continue to be displaced, marginalised and suffer health impacts from the nuclear bomb tests at Maralinga and the Olympic Dam uranium mine in South Australia which divides their community, depletes their water and pollutes their land with radioactive contamination forever.

We acknowledge that the Pilbara and Ashburton people of Western Australia also suffered the effects of the British nuclear weapons tests at Monte Bello Islands.

Like most Australians we are devastated that Australian uranium sold to TEPCO in Japan is likely to be part of the nuclear disaster in Fukushima. WANFA condemns Premier Colin Barnett’s proposal to compensate uranium mining companies for impacts on the industry arising from Fukushima as a vulgar misunderstanding that it is the Japanese people who will continue to suffer for generations, not the industry.

Our job is to stop uranium from our country contaminating people and lands here and overseas. We take this job seriously. We came together to share information, plans and strategies to stop uranium mining companies like BHP, Toro Energy, Mega Lake Maitland, Energy Minerals Australia, Cameco and Mitsubishi that are exploring for uranium on our land, dividing our communities and already contaminating our land, animals and water with drilling for uranium.

We are determined to stop the poison of uranium mining in Western Australia by:

- Sharing information and our stories to educate people about the true risks of radiation;
- Peaceful protest to demand the truth from government;
- Challenging the state and federal government mining approvals processes;
- Challenging the Australian Uranium Association's Indigenous Dialogue Group who are representing the industry rather than a true Aboriginal community view;
- Challenging and exposing anthropologists, archaeologists and pro industry consultants that cover up, excuse the industry or silence us;
- Demanding that our Land Councils, Native Title representative bodies, Native Title service organisations, be accountable, transparent and represent our views as they are legally required to do;

We call for

- **Governments and the nuclear industry to tell the truth about radiation.** There is no safe level of radiation. Some radiation lasts for thousands of years. Stop minimising and trivialising the dangers. Stop pretending optimism is a scientific method.
- **The WA government to commission an open and independent public inquiry into uranium mining.**
- **The Federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke, to block any proposed uranium mining project in Western Australia.**
- **The WA government to** immediately act to protect Aboriginal health, including conducting base line health studies in regional areas and publicly release data, to identify the root cause and address the current Aboriginal health problems in Western Australia.
- **The Western Australian ALP to stand firm on their prudent and popular policy against uranium mining in our state.** With this clear policy declaration, mining companies must understand any investment in uranium is an unnecessary risk as there is no bi-partisan political support for this industry and it is strongly contested by Aboriginal people.
- Those who finance the uranium industry to avoid the uncertainty and contamination of this trade and instead invest in renewable, clean energy.