

Stop Australian Uranium Fueling More Fukushimas

Statement from Australian National Nuclear Free Movement Conference

8 April 2011

As the word 'Fukushima' moves across the headlines and radioactive fallout moves across Japan and pours into the ocean and as the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident approaches, representatives of Australia's nuclear free movement gathered in Melbourne.

As Australians we feel a special responsibility as uranium from our country fuels the nuclear chain worldwide, including the TEPCO and other nuclear facilities in Japan.

Yvonne Margarula, Aboriginal Traditional Owner of the lands on which the Ranger uranium mine sits in Kakadu National Park, summed up this sense of responsibility in her letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, expressing profound sadness that radiation problems at Fukushima were possibly fuelled by uranium derived from her traditional lands.

We believe that the governments and corporations Australia sells uranium to are in denial about nuclear risks, and consequently lack a preparedness and capacity to deal with those risks.

We feel a profound sympathy for those suffering in Japan from the terrible earthquake, the recovery from which is made so much harder by the resultant and continuing nuclear disaster. We deplore the lack of sensitivity shown by Australian uranium mining executives, including referring to Fukushima as a 'side show' and we condemn and contest those nuclear industry advocates and apologists perversely attempting to exploit the Fukushima disaster to promote the nuclear industry.

Our sympathies particularly go out to the Fukushima workers who have died and been exposed to radiation, the citizens impacted by radioactive fallout on homes, neighbourhoods and towns, the people whose lands and livelihoods have been devastated by radioactive contamination and to the people of Tokyo who fear the water from their taps.

There are people in Australia, many people, who care about your welfare and the long-term health and environmental impacts of the nuclear disaster resulting from the quake. We extend our solidarity and support and pledge to redouble our efforts to prevent more disasters by keeping uranium in the ground.

The serious and continuing nuclear emergency of Fukushima has caused many governments around the world to pause in the light of these extreme events and to reconsider the costs and consequences of their nuclear choices.

The Australian Government should follow the actions of the German, Swiss, Chinese and Venezuelan governments that are pausing to reflect on the merits and risks of nuclear power and consider more sustainable options.

Our Government should pause to conduct a thorough review of its responsibilities and of the risks and consequences of being a major uranium supplier, including our links not only to Fukushima and the many other reactors around the world burning Australian uranium, but to the nuclear weapons industry which continues to hold the world to ransom sixty six years after their first use on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We have a choice: Instead of fuelling nuclear uncertainties with Australian uranium we must join the global move to energy systems that literally don't cost the Earth. Many countries are contemplating, planning, preparing and implementing a transition from a fossil economy to a renewable future. We must join them.

The future is renewable not radioactive.