

# URANIUM MINING: UNWANTED, UNNECESSARY, UNSAFE

Not since the 1960s have Australians faced such a concerted push to expand the nuclear industry. This push includes all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle – uranium mining and enrichment, nuclear power, and high-level nuclear waste disposal.

Since 1996, the Federal Government has actively supported the development of new uranium mines in addition to existing mines at Ranger, in the NT, and Roxby Downs (Olympic Dam) in SA. However, only one new mine has opened in the past decade – Beverley in SA. Mining of the small Honeymoon deposit in SA has been approved.

**Undermining Aboriginal Land Rights:** Uranium mining almost always occurs on Aboriginal land. Some mining companies have employed divide and rule tactics, misinformation campaigns and unfair negotiation rules that have resulted in serious social impacts on Aboriginal communities. Where mines have been established, natural and cultural heritage has sometimes been destroyed forever. Attempts to establish new uranium mines would result in further examples of mining companies exerting unwanted pressure on Indigenous communities, as with the attempt to override the Mirarr Traditional Owners' unanimous opposition to the Jabiluka mine in the Northern Territory. Hundreds of thousands of Australians actively supported the successful struggle of the Mirarr to protect their land and to secure a right of veto over the development of the mine.

The uranium mining industry has a poor track record in its dealings with Aboriginal Traditional Owners. Aboriginal and environmental groups have formed the Alliance Against Uranium to co-ordinate efforts to end this pattern of 'radioactive racism'. The tactics used by uranium mining companies against Aboriginal communities include: ignoring the concerns of Traditional Owners insofar as the legal and political circumstances permit; divide-and-rule tactics; bribery; 'humbugging' Traditional Owners (exerting persistent, unwanted pressure); providing Traditional Owners with false or misleading information; and threats, most commonly legal threats.

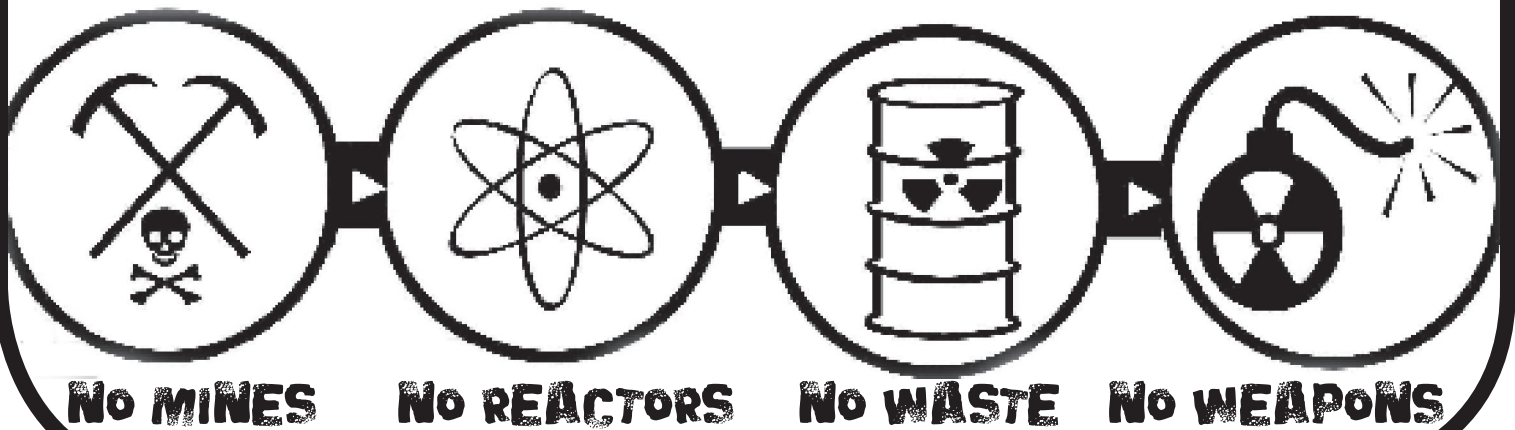
**Produces radioactive waste:** The mines at Roxby Downs and Ranger have produced over 120 million tonnes of radioactive tailings waste. If the proposed expansion of Roxby Downs proceeds, it will produce over one tonne of radioactive tailings waste every second! There are no plans for long-term management of the waste. Uranium enrichment plants leave a legacy of long-lived depleted uranium waste. And in power reactors, Australian uranium is converted into high-level nuclear waste.

**Massive water consumption and pollution:** The daily extraction of 35 million litres of Great Artesian Basin water for the Roxby Downs mine has destroyed some of the precious Mound Springs and adversely impacted on others. BHP Billiton does not pay one cent for this massive water take. At the Beverley mine in SA, an in-situ leaching process is used which involves dumping radioactive and acidic waste water directly into the underlying aquifer.

**Produces greenhouse gases:** the mining, milling and enrichment of uranium ore is energy intensive. Even when high quality ores are used a nuclear plant must operate for 7-10 years just to repay its energy inputs (and this is on top of the 10 years that it takes to build a nuclear plant). By comparison it takes only 3-6 months for wind power to repay its energy inputs.

**Few jobs and little revenue:** Uranium accounted for less than one-third of one percent of Australia's export revenue in 2005. Australia earned more from the export of cheese and five times as much from the export of wine and medicines.

**Uranium directly leads to radioactive waste and nuclear weapons risks.  
It is not clean, safe or needed. Leave it in the ground!**



# NUCLEAR POWER FOR AUSTRALIA?

## Ten reasons to say no to nuclear power:

- 1. Accidents and attacks:** Nuclear power reactors are vulnerable to disasters from accidents, military attacks, or the use of conventional forces to attack nuclear facilities during war.
- 2. Waste:** The 2006 Switkowski report envisages the construction of 25 power reactors, producing up to 45,000 tonnes of high-level nuclear waste.
- 3. Weapons:** As former Prime Minister Paul Keating said last year: "Any country with a nuclear power program "ipso facto ends up with a nuclear weapons capability".
- 4. Cost:** The nuclear power industry survives only because of huge taxpayer subsidies.
- 5. Reduced property prices and compulsory land acquisition:** A nuclear power plant would inevitably reduce local property values. The government may use compulsory land acquisition powers to seize land for reactors (just as it has previously for a nuclear waste dump).
- 6. No insurance.** Insurance companies do not allow insurance against the risk of nuclear accidents.
- 7. Water:** Nuclear power is the most water-intensive energy source. Reactors typically consume 35-65 million litres of water per day.
- 8. Too slow:** It would probably take 15 years or more to develop nuclear power in Australia. Clean energy solutions can be deployed immediately.
- 9. Greenhouse gases:** Nuclear power emits three times more greenhouse gases than wind power.
- 10 Unnecessary:** We don't need nuclear power. A clean energy future is viable and affordable.

## Nuclear Power: No Solution to Climate Change

Doubling global nuclear power output by 2050 would only reduce greenhouse emissions by about 5% – less than one-tenth of the required reduction. It would require the construction of 800-900 reactors, which would produce over one million tonnes of high-level nuclear waste and enough plutonium to build over one million nuclear weapons.

## Clean energy solutions to climate change are available and affordable.

A clean, greenhouse-friendly energy future – based primarily on renewable energy and energy efficiency and conservation measures – is viable and affordable.

Renewable energy, mostly hydroelectricity, already supplies 19% of world electricity, compared to nuclear's 16%. Great strides towards a clean energy future would be achieved by redirecting public subsidies to fossil fuels – over \$6.5 billion per year in Australia – to clean energy solutions.

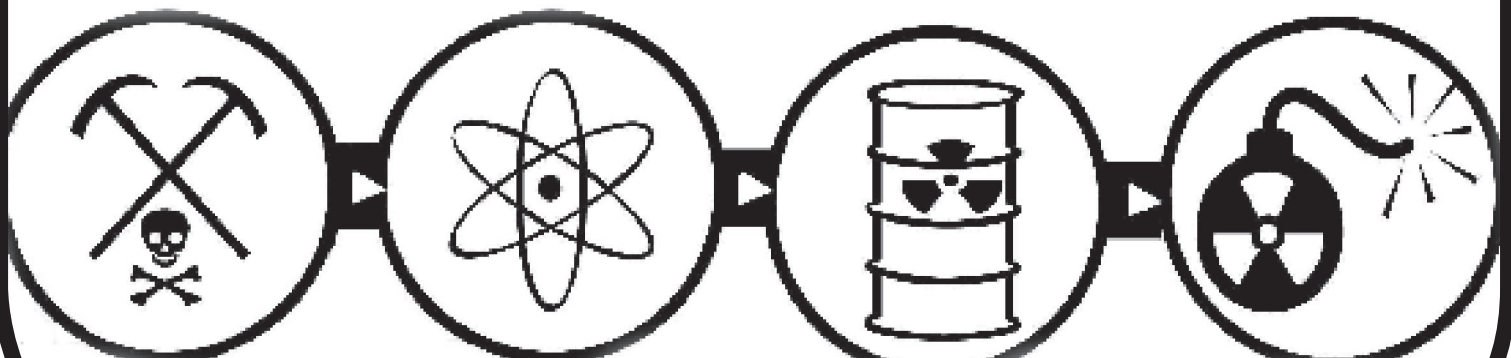
**Do you live near one of the 19 areas most likely to be targeted for nuclear power reactors?** See the Australia Institute's research paper #40, 'Siting Nuclear Power Plants in Australia: Where would they go?', at <[www.tai.org.au](http://www.tai.org.au)>.

For more information, see:

\* EnergyScience Coalition <[www.energyscience.org.au](http://www.energyscience.org.au)>

\* Australian Student Environment Network <[www.asen.org.au](http://www.asen.org.au)>

\* Friends of the Earth, Australia <[www.foe.org.au/campaigns/anti-nuclear](http://www.foe.org.au/campaigns/anti-nuclear)>



**No MINES**

**No REACTORS**

**No WASTE**

**No WEAPONS**

# NUCLEAR WASTE?

The plan to dump Federal radioactive waste in the Northern Territory came about after overwhelming community opposition forced the Government to abandon its plans for a national waste dump in South Australia. Despite giving an “absolute categorical assurance” prior to the last election that the NT would not be targeted for a radioactive dump, in June 2005 the Federal Government announced that three Department of Defence sites in the NT; Mt Everard, Harts Range and Fisher’s Ridge, would be assessed for suitability. Muckaty Station, near Tennant Creek, may be added to the list of sites.

**Dianne Stokes, Warrumungu and Warlmanpa Woman, Muckaty Traditional Owner, Kalumpurlpa community:**

“Top to bottom we got bush tucker right through the country. Whoever is taking this waste dump into our country needs to come back and talk to the Traditional Owners. We’re not happy to have all of this stuff. We don’t want it, it’s not our spirit. Our spirit is our country, our country where our ancestors been born. Before towns, before hospitals, before cities. We want our country to be safe.”

Since the NT dump proposal was announced, an active alliance and support network has developed between communities near the sites and along waste transport routes, with supporters nationwide who recognise and oppose the undemocratic and unscientific process being used to foist the dump on remote and indigenous NT communities.

**Uranium is a dirty fuel – it is used to create nuclear weapons, and it becomes radioactive waste that is toxic and deadly for 250,000 years. After 50 years in the global nuclear industry there is still no safe way to store nuclear waste.**

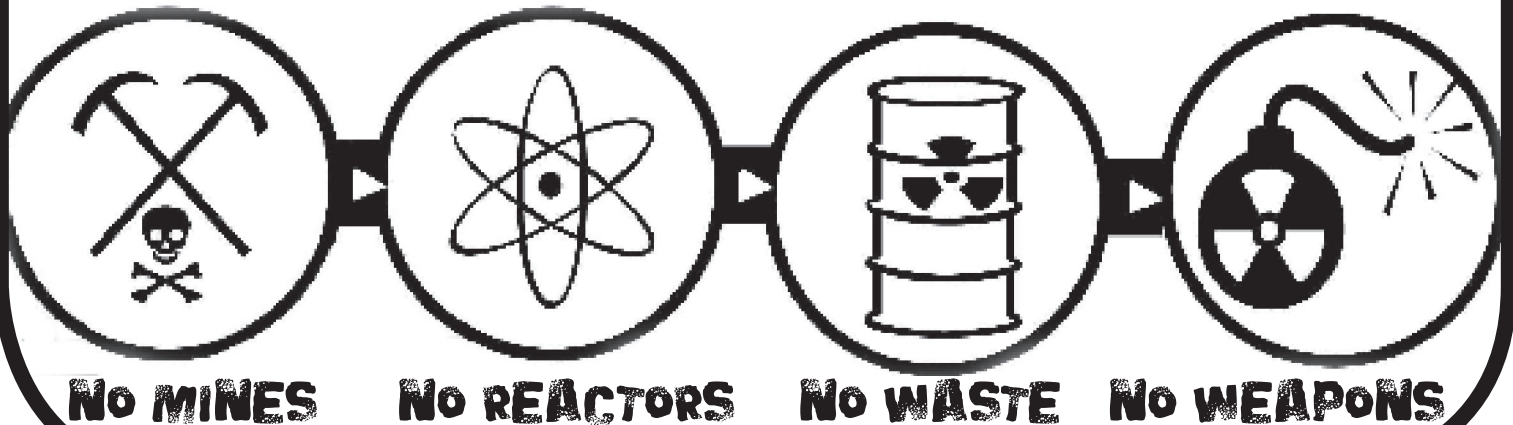
Community opposition stopped a radioactive waste dump in South Australia. Now people nation wide must stand up, speak out and help stop the Government poisoning the heartland

The Federal Government is attempting to impose a nuclear waste dump in the Northern Territory, ignoring NT legislation designed to ban the imposition of nuclear dumps and ignoring widespread public opposition.

Around the world, nuclear power reactors have produced over 250,000 tonnes of high-level nuclear waste, yet not a single permanent repository exists anywhere in the world for the disposal of this waste.

Only a few countries – such as the US, Sweden and Finland – have identified potential sites for a high-level nuclear waste repository. The US Yucca Mountain project has been a \$10 billion fiasco which is 23 years behind schedule and may never open. Sweden has yet to decide on a location for a permanent repository, while Finland is set to begin studies at a site which may or may not prove to be suitable.

There is a renewed push for Australia to accept high-level nuclear waste from overseas. Australia’s entry to the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership will mean that uranium mined on Aboriginal lands and exported, will return to be stored in an international nuclear waste dump, proposed on Aboriginal lands in the Northern Territory. As Professor John Veevers from Macquarie University wrote in the Australian Geologist in August 1999, such a dump would pose serious public health and environmental risks: “Tonnes of enormously dangerous radioactive waste in the northern hemisphere, 20,000 kms from its destined dump in Australia where it must remain intact for at least 10,000 years. These magnitudes – of tonnage, lethality, distance of transport, and time – entail great inherent risk.”



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# DIY ACTION FOR A NUCLEAR FREE AUSTRALIA

Better Active Today Than Radioactive Tomorrow! Together we can roll back the current nuclear push and work towards a clean energy future. Here are some things you can do:

- \* Join your local youth climate action anti-nuclear group or start a group in your school or region.
- \* Put on a film screening of Climate of Hope or Living Country in your area (for copies, contact [holly@asen.org.au](mailto:holly@asen.org.au))
- \* Lobby political representatives and candidates.
- \* Get your local council to adopt anti-nuclear policies and to fight any proposals to site nuclear facilities in your area.
- \* Write letters to newspaper (tips and contact details are posted at [www.foe.org.au/campaigns/anti-nuclear](http://www.foe.org.au/campaigns/anti-nuclear)).
- \* Stay in touch: subscribe to the monthly email newsletter, No Nukes News, by emailing [jim.green@foe.org.au](mailto:jim.green@foe.org.au) with NNN-Subscribe in the subject line.

## WHEATPASTING

Get ya message out for a nuclear free Australia. Drawings, posters, images, action notices, bulletins can easily be photocopied and stuck around town.

Prepare 1 cup of very hot water. Make a thin mixture of 3 tablespoons (45 ml) of white flour and cold water (just enough to wet all the flour and make it liquid enough to pour). Pour the cold mixture slowly into the hot water while stirring constantly. Bring to a boil. When it thickens, allow to cool. For slightly better strength, add 1 tablespoon (15 ml) of sugar after the glue is thickened. If wheat flour is not available, other flours will work. Smear on the wall / surface, place ya paper on top.

## MAKE A BANNER TO SEND TO TRADITIONAL OWNERS FIGHTING A NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

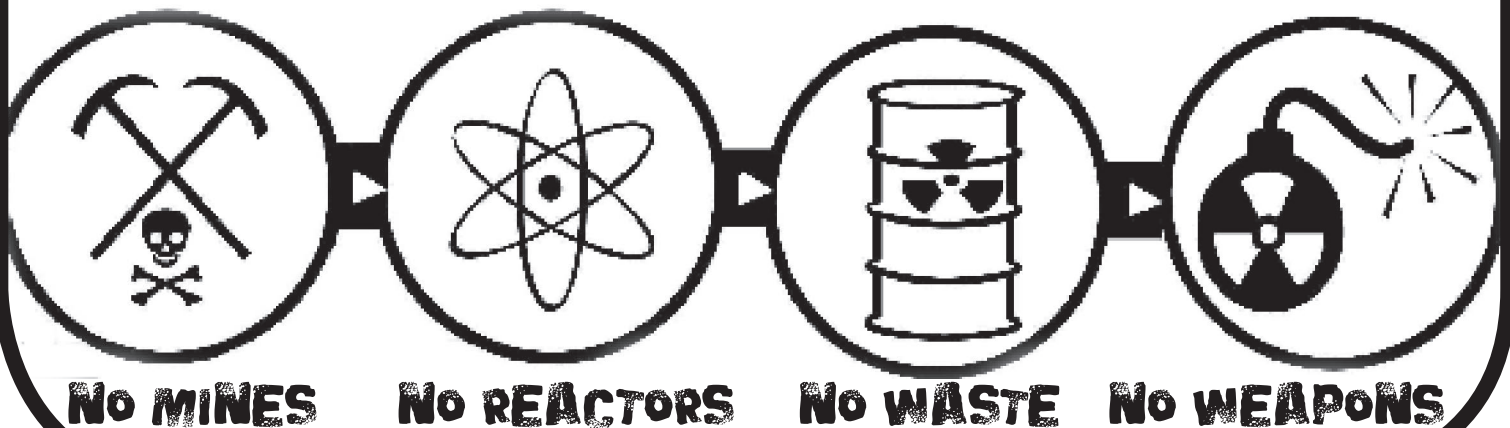
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1. Source a couple of metres fabric (fabric shop or an cotton old sheet) and acrylic or fabric paint.
2. Spend a bit of time designing a good design and slogan and draw it in pencil on the fabric
3. Place newspaper under the banner, and start painting

Your banners could say:

[Your group / school / community] support Traditional Owners in the Northern Territory saying NO NUCLEAR WASTE DUMP in the NT or anywhere; [Your group] support Traditional Owners fighting to protect country; Uranium: fuelling weapons, fuelling waste; Yes to a Nuclear-Free Australia; No Nuclear Waste Dump; Uranium: Don't Dig it, Don't Dump It.

Contact [holly@asen.org.au](mailto:holly@asen.org.au) / 0417682541 / 19 Eve St, Erskineville, NSW for where to send banners to communities.



## HOW TO Make SLiMe

\* 1 cup water \* 1 cup cornflour \* Food colouring

Slime is an excellent prop for anti-nuclear action, information stalls, fundraiser parties. It looks particularly excellent smeared over stalls, glass or offices of nuclear and uranium mining companies.

1. Pour some cornflour into a mixing bowl
2. Stir in small amounts of water until the cornflour has become a very thick paste
3. Thoroughly stir about five drops of green food colouring into the mixture. Add more cornflour if it is too runny or add more water if it is too thick.

You can keep your cornflour and water mixture covered in a fridge for several days. If the cornflour settles, you need to stir it to make it work well again

## WRITE TO STOP URANIUM MINING AT KOONGARRA

The Koongarra uranium deposit was discovered by Noranda (Australia) Pty Ltd in 1970, approximately 3km east of Nourlangie Rock in the NT. Prior to the establishment of Kakadu National Park (KNP), an application for a Special Mineral Lease SML69 was made over an area covering 13km<sup>2</sup> but was never granted.

This year, senior Djok tradition owner Jeffrey Lee publicly called for no uranium mining at Koongarra and for the area to be incorporated into the Kakadu National Park.

The Koongarra deposit is located in one of the most sensitive areas of Kakadu, situated upstream from the Ramsar Convention listed Woolwonga wetlands.

In 1998 a UN World Heritage Committee mission visited the area, and recommended a uranium mine at Koongarra never proceed and be incorporated into the Kakadu National Park.

The NT government and Federal Government has stated that it remains committed to honouring the decision of the traditional owners regarding mining at Koongarra, and to protecting the rich cultural and environmental values of Kakadu National Park. Let's hold them to it.

Let Malcolm Turnbull and Peter Garrett know you want the rights of Traditional Owners recognised and Koongarra incorporated into the Kakadu National Park before the Federal Election. Email and cc [holly@asen.org.au](mailto:holly@asen.org.au) in your email.

## MORE INFORMATION

- \* Australian Student Environment Network <[www.asen.org.au](http://www.asen.org.au)>
- \* Friends of the Earth, Australia <[www.foe.org.au/campaigns/anti-nuclear](http://www.foe.org.au/campaigns/anti-nuclear)>
- \* EnergyScience Coalition <[www.energyscience.org.au](http://www.energyscience.org.au)>

The Australian Student Environment Network Nuclear-Free crew are excited about engaging young people on nuclear issues, public education, creating nuclear free universities, Cycling Against the Nuclear Cycle ([www.canc.org.au](http://www.canc.org.au)), wicked film screenings, radioactive jelly wrestling competitions and more! We're passionate about building a nuclear-free future with YOU, so get in touch!

You can subscribe to our low-volume elist: <http://lists.riseup.net/www/subscribe/asennuclearfree>

To get involved in campaigning for a nuclear-free future contact: Holly Creenaune ( 0417 682 541 / [holly@asen.org.au](mailto:holly@asen.org.au) )

