

Overview

The subject of Nuclear Fuel production has been a matter of National discussion and investigation for the past 60 years in Australia. The people of this country have emphatically rejected the development of Nuclear Fuel production, from every stage of mining, milling, fuel fabrication and power generation, to any involvement in the proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world.

The Nuclear Power proponents, have at every stage despite persistent resistance, continued to force the Australian Public to defend the non-nuclear position. Here, we find ourselves again defending the right of our country to remain as Nuclear-Free as possible, considering we have already be encumbered with the legacy of numbers of Uranium Mines past and present, for a clean future in Australia.

These are serious issues which the Public does not take lightly. It is plain to see from these "Tentative Findings" that minimal consideration has been given to the concerns and objections raised in a range of submissions received.

The subject matter which the Commission has been charged to investigate, has been studied in a less than thorough or in depth manner.

The following comments are responses based on first-hand knowledge of the actions of the Nuclear Industry in South Australia as was my Submission.

The Energy Future

1. It must be re-iterated that proponents of Nuclear power production cannot claim that this is a "low-carbon energy generation technology", when the current mode of producing the raw materials for such power production, is generated from the use of high levels of fossil-fuel generated power, eg. Olympic Dam requires 10% of SA electricity for production purposes, and, produces high levels of carbon-rich emissions.
2. It is unreasonable to commit policy, economy and planning to the development of a power generating scheme, that is stated by this process to be unviable.

Exploration, Extraction and Milling.

3. This paper's over-simplification of the hazards of Uranium Mining is irresponsible.
4. Market trends reflect Global need/demand. There is clearly a long-term downturn in Uranium demand, coupled with over-supply, and, "uncertainty around future growth of Nuclear power generation."

Further Processing and Manufacture.

5. What advantage is there in replacing one hazardous emission (carbon) with another (radioactivity)?

Added to this are the toxic, corrosive and explosive chemicals which the commission finds are “the most significant environmental and safety risks for conversion, enrichment, and fuel fabrication facilities.”

6. The Legislative framework which inhibits development of a Nuclear manufacturing industry is there in response to the rejection of this industry by the Australian people. The position that has been taken is the result of exhaustive studies and investigation of Nuclear Power by a wide section of the Health, Work Safety, Scientific and broader Community.

7. The problems of this hazardous industry have been reduced through these findings, to a misleading financial enticement to the General Public, that ignores the reality of dealing with Nuclear materials and the problems that do already exist in Australia as a result of Nuclear contamination.

Electricity Generation.

8. It is insufficient to state that “Lessons have been learned” from the cited Nuclear accidents. This paper has not addressed the impacts that did occur in those regions, and the ramifications of those accidents now. The consideration of these matters has been shallow at best and largely ignored by this report. It is currently being reported that even the Robots are “dying” in the Fukushima Daiichi Power Plant, with the heat and radiation emissions dissolving the wiring in these machines.

9. This paper has declared a list of reasons that Nuclear Power Generation is not viable, and yet, sees fit to request a commitment to keep it on the Agenda, through Legislative arrangements.

Management, Storage and Disposal of Waste.

10. This paper states: “Manufacturing radiopharmaceuticals using cyclotron produces very small quantities of short-lived wastes, which are already managed.....ANSTO sufficient for Australia’s needs.”

11. This paper recognizes that the Australian people have rejected the establishment of Nuclear Waste Disposal Sites in this country.

12. The named facilities have provided the services that have created the waste and with such knowledge are best-placed to manage the waste into the future.

13. The establishment of purpose-built facilities removes the inherent restraint mechanism that currently exists wherein those responsible for producing Nuclear product and waste are conscious of its disposal. Without this restraining mechanism the awareness of what is being produced and its disposal is no longer a safe-guard to responsible production. If its easy to dump, haphazard practice is likely.

14. This paper indicates that a National dump site for low-level and intermediate nuclear waste would require a minimum level of consideration of its suitability, compared to that of a international dump site. It infers a less rigorous process of choosing and approving the site.

15. It is irresponsible of countries to take on use of Nuclear materials without having disposal plans. It is equally irresponsible of Australia to provide Uranium to countries who have no plan.

16. Nuclear Production has gone ahead regardless of consequences, and, despite the significant warnings and objections voiced by populations in Australia and across the world for the past 60 years.

17. A national radioactive repository was rejected in S.A. in the late 1990's, and then in the N.T. in 2015.

18. An international nuclear waste facility was rejected in W.A. in 2002.

19. This paper focuses almost singularly on the money to be derived for giving irresponsible decision-makers here and abroad, an out for the problems they have created.

Fuel Leasing.

20. To set up an industry based on guarantees of waste disposal is committing Australia to an overload of Nuclear reciprocity.

21. Any new development of Nuclear Facilities or operations is a National concern and not merely confined to the decision-makers at a local or state level. All developments that have taken place in Australia affect the wider population and the magnitude of dealing with these hazardous materials has traditionally required nation endorsement. For too long these projects have been pushed through despite large-scale resistance from the Australian Public. Now we are being asked to play host to the mess that has been created both nationally and internationally.

22. "Transparency" is a term when used in such context, makes a mockery of public consultation and decision-making. In an industry that is hidden within Legislative Agreements that prohibit "freedom of information" and with information locked up in inter-departmental exchanges that circumvent any public disclosure, there is no transparency.

23. Local get-togethers do not equal public engagement. These are serious matters which are of National concern.

24. If a Community cannot remain viable in the vicinity of a coal mine (currently the case in N.S.W.), how will it remain in the vicinity of a Nuclear Waste Dump?

25. Where there is limited Community support, no list of strategies is going to change that. The Commission would do better to listen to what people are actively saying and discourage the push for an expansion of the Nuclear Industry in Australia.

26. There are no rehabilitation arrangements for Olympic Dam.

27. There has been a statement issued in 2015 by the Desert Tribal People from all areas North and West of Pt. Augusta rejecting the placement of a Waste Dump or expansion of Uranium Mining in their country. People from the Flinders Ranges have rejected a proposed National repository site in their country. The people of these regions have a long and embattled history of dealings with the Nuclear Industry².

28. There is no data to support claims regarding public exposure to radiation.

29. Seismic and flood events are common and unpredictable occurrences across most regions of S.A.

30. Following the Chernobyl accident there were considerable and corroborated reports of multiple deaths resulting from illness amongst the population in that region, which facts seem to have alluded this investigation

31. Fukushima- there is a vast array of evidence of much greater contamination than claimed in this paper.

Proliferation.

32. "Many processes in the nuclear fuel cycle, such as enrichment, are continuous. Samples of any pure isotope from anywhere in the world are physically identical. It therefore makes no sense to identify nuclear material as "Australian" once it enters the fuel cycle and becomes mixed with material from elsewhere in the world. (Australia and the Nuclear Choice. June 1984. Total Environment, Sydney.)

33. Potential for more accidents will increase world-wide with transport of large quantities of radioactive materials.

34. The regulatory framework that is already in place is questionable in its ability to address issues causing radioactive contamination at mine sites. How is the Australian Public encouraged to have any real confidence on the validity of expansion of the Nuclear Industry in this country when it is known that current practices are negligent.