

Re: Finding Number 22:

This finding states that ...

***1. Energy generation technologies that use thorium as a fuel component are not presently commercial, nor expected to be in the foreseeable future.***

This technology may not be available as an off the shelf commercial 'product', but I understand that it has been built in the past, at least to the size of a small commercial output, at about the same time that small uranium reactors were being developed. From what I understand, thorium power generation is so simple and safe (relative to uranium power generation) that I cannot imagine that we in Australia could not muster up the intellectual resources to set up the world's first truly commercial power plant in a relatively short period of time.

***2. Further, with the low price of uranium and its broad acceptance as the fuel source for the most dominant type of nuclear reactor, there is no commercial incentive to develop thorium as a fuel.***

I think that the statement that uranium as a fuel has broad (community) acceptance is quite open to dispute. Also, compared to uranium (and even coal) I expect that thorium would be hugely more acceptable because of its great advantages in the areas of safety and cleanliness. Given the choice, I believe that the population will welcome thorium reactors with open arms. There is, therefore, a significant social incentive/imperative to develop thorium as a fuel. We could also then export the technology. This would release the world from the need to store spent uranium, and those who wish to weaponise plutonium can continue to do so via existing uranium fuelled reactors.

***3. Although South Australia possesses numerous thorium deposits, it does not have a competitive advantage in that resource as it does with uranium.***

This seems to me to be a spurious argument aimed at covering up what appears to be a deliberately dismissive attitude regarding thorium. Why do we need a competitive advantage to proceed with thorium reactors? All we need is access to a sufficient long term supply of thorium, which, I understand, we have in spades.

I really hope that this thorium option does not continue to be dismissed. We have the opportunity and ability to do something truly great with thorium, rather than to move ahead with the mediocre and relatively dirty/dangerous old technology of coal and/or uranium power generation.

Regards

Ed Zahra

B.Com. (Economics & Psychology); Dip.App.Psych.; Dip.Clin.Hyp.; M.App.Psych. (Clinical & Educational)