

Resolution

In the light of the overwhelming dangers potentially arising from the usage of uranium, and the small contribution from uranium to BHP's profits, that BHP cease to mine, refine and sell this material, in the interest of the safety of our children and generations to come.

Supporting Information

Uranium is valued because it can be used to generate energy and to fuel Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). Claims that it is 'Carbon Free' completely ignore the substantial carbon costs of its mining, processing, power station construction, protection and disposal.

To fuel a reactor generating electricity natural uranium must be enriched to bring the percentage of U235 up from 0.7% to between 3 and 5%. If it is further enriched, using the same processes, it can be used to build a bomb. The 80% or so of uranium (U238) removed in the enrichment process has few uses. The US military have found that its great weight makes it ideal for anti-tank shells which have a devastating penetration and burning effect, releasing radioactive dust. Paediatricians in Iraq, where many hundreds of tonnes of this ammunition was used in 1991, have noted an extraordinary increase in childhood cancer and severe congenital malformations.

Waste Products

Reactors fueled with uranium generate many intensely radioactive substances, some not found in nature. One of the most dangerous products is plutonium. A typical power reactor makes enough plutonium each year to enable manufacture of about 30 nuclear weapons, each of which needs a volume of plutonium not much larger than a tennis ball. Carcinogenic radioactive gases are routinely vented to the atmosphere.

International Situation

Signatories to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty have failed to disarm as they had promised and progress on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty has been blocked by the USA and others. The Australian Government has declared its support for selling uranium to the USA, UK, Japan, China, Russia, South Korea, and its interest in India. There are major strategic tensions between various pairs of these countries, along with Israel and Pakistan, all of which have the capacity to manufacture nuclear bombs. These tensions flare occasionally into shooting wars. Journalists have very limited ability to visit nuclear reactor, processing and waste sites and to freely obtain and exchange information on their activity. The sovereign governments differ widely in their accessibility, stability and responsibility.

In some of these countries investigative journalists have been jailed, beaten and murdered. Even the US, UK and Australian governments have concealed information on nuclear matters. In the event of disagreement arising, Australian capacity to dictate the use of our uranium in other sovereign countries is minimal. Even if our uranium and its byproducts are only used for electricity generation, it frees up material from other sources for military use.

Policing

The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Dr Mohammed ElBaradei, has noted that the IAEA's basic inspection rights are "fairly limited", that the safeguards system suffers from "vulnerabilities", that efforts to improve the system have been "half-hearted", and that the safeguards system operates on a "shoestring budget".

Subsidy by Taxpayers, Community and our Children.

The nuclear industry has always depended upon taxpayer funding for its viability. It has never been self supporting. The potential costs and dangers of the industry are borne by taxpayers and by our community. We should note that our insurance policies specifically exclude coverage of radioactive accidents, because of the near impossibility of cleaning up at any supportable cost. The toxic legacy of waste disposal, accident and warfare will be passed to generations to follow, for the sake of a very few dollars of dividend and some electricity for our short term comfort.

In Conclusion

In the light of the overwhelming dangers posed by the nuclear industry we believe that shareholders should be presented with a clear picture of the risks it brings to our children. Individually we should express our concerns regarding the activity of our company in fuelling the nuclear industry.

Name – Printed _____

Signature

Address