



Hon. Brian Ellis, chairman,

Standing committee on Environment and Public Affairs,
Legislative Council Committee Office,
18-32 Parliament Place, West Perth, 6000.

Dear Mr. Ellis,

Petition # 38 – Uranium Mining in Western Australia

Thank you for the opportunity for further comment regarding this petition, which I believe is of great public interest to the people of Western Australia.

As you rightly point out “the issue of uranium mining divides the community,” which ANAWA would contend is good reason for your Committee to make further investigations. Despite the fact that there have been various uranium mining explorations carried out in this State – usually with negative legacies (Maningyee & Yeerlirrie deposits come to mind immediately), a commercial uranium mining venture is new territory for Western Australia. It should not be entered into without the most stringent scrutiny.

We are concerned by some of the claims made in Minster Moore’s letter to your Committee, dated 12 November, 2009, and in particular, we draw to your attention three areas which warrant attention:

1. **Government subsidies/cost issues:** the Minister claims that the W.A. Government will not be subsidising the mining of uranium. However, in response to a Question in Parliament from the Hon. Robin Chapple on 30/3/10 regarding Royalties for regions, I note that three uranium mining companies are included: #3 Aura, #16 Encounter, #33 ~~Peru~~, with various sums of money listed. Surely this deserves clarification.

ANTI-NUCLEAR ALLIANCE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

• THE AUSTRALIAN CONSERVATION FOUNDATION • THE CONSERVATION COUNCIL OF WA • COMMUNITY ANTI-NUCLEAR NETWORK WA •
• CITIZENS FOR JUSTICE IN MALAWI • ENVIRONMENT HOUSE • FREMANTLE ANTI NUCLEAR GROUP • MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
PREVENTION OF WAR • PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR A NUCLEAR-FREE FUTURE • PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT
• SUSTAINABLE ENERGY NOW • SOUTH WEST ANTI-NUCLEAR GROUP • THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY OF WA

5 King William Street, Bayswater WA 6053
Telephone/Fax: (08)9271 8786 Email: info@anawa.org.au Web: www.anawa.org.au

2. **Safely dealing with nuclear waste:** the Minister re-iterates the Government's continued support for the Nuclear Waste Storage and Transportation (Prohibition) Act of 1999, about which we are very pleased. However, our concerns are not confined to the dumping of international nuclear waste in this state, which is what that Act of Parliament covers. He makes absolutely no reference to the radioactive leftovers which will be considerable, and difficult to contain, from the process of mining in this state, should that proceed as the Government wishes. The experience of supposed "state-of-the-art" operations at Ranger in Northern Territory and Roxby Downs/Olympic Dam in South Australia leave much to be desired on the matter of tailings Either too much water in the case of Ranger (flooding of the tailings dams when torrential rainfall is heavier than predicted), and in the case of Roxby, strong winds which disperse the tailings widely, and as is the case in many arid regions, the possibility of flash flooding should also be taken into account.

3. **Water consumption:** ;the Minister's comments on this subject are pathetically inadequate. Consumption rates are acknowledged to be greater than for some other mining operations. But it is not just quantity of water usage which requires further scrutiny, but the fact that water taken for this kind of operation is no longer available to pastoralists and other users. Of high significance are unanswered questions regarding the potential damage to the water table, and to the entire eco-system. This must be investigated thoroughly. A detailed hydrological study of the entire mid-west region, the Pilbara, the Gascoyne, the Kimberley – all areas rich in uranium deposits, should be undertaken, taking into account environmental and social consequences.

Looking forward to hearing from you again.

Yours sincerely,



Jo Vallentine

ANAWA Chairperson

22/4/10