

Submission to: Senate Committee for Environment & Communications Legislation

Regarding: Inquiry into “Environment and Other Legislation Amendment (Removing Nuclear Energy Prohibitions) Bill 2022”

By Susanne Godden

12 December 2022

I am a concerned citizen from Western Australia, writing in defence of the existing ban on nuclear power in Australia.

The reasons for my current view are:

- “First do no harm”.
 - *There is no safe way to dispose of radioactive waste material* as it remains radioactive for up to 100,000 years! The idea of barrels under the ocean, which must corrode after (at most) decades, is laughable. The only attempt at burial deep underground in America failed, with low-level radiation affecting people above ground.
 - There is an unacceptable *risk of accident* on-site or during transfer from mine to port.
 - There is an assumption that Australia has lots of remote vacant land to mine uranium from, build nuclear plants on and dispose of unwanted waste, but *this fails to consider indigenous people* who live on country and retain deep spiritual ties to their ancestral homeland.
 - We have limited ability to track nuclear materials. They *could be used to make weapons* in other countries that may not be our allies. Let’s aim for peace.
 - Any nuclear facility could make Australia a military target.
 - Please consider the legacies of Hiroshima & Nagasaki 1945, Three Mile Island 1979, Chernobyl 1986 and Fukushima 2011.
- Renewable energy is faster and cheaper
 - According to global scientists it is necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions urgently to prevent climate catastrophe.
 - Nuclear power infrastructure would take decades to create.
 - We have vast quantities of sun and wind to tap into, NOW.
 - It does not make sense to start changing our laws to allow nuclear power, then spend decades building infrastructure, when there is a cheaper and faster alternative available. The small modular reactors that have been suggested are not commercially available.

- Workers in the coal and gas industries can be transitioned to renewable energy jobs for the future; they don't need jobs in a nuclear industry which would cause more problems overall.
- Unpopular
 - Nuclear power is unpopular with most Australians.

In summary, nuclear power is dangerous, expensive and will be too slow to make the massive rapid changes necessary to deal with the heating climate emergency.

I understand there is currently an energy crisis due to the war in Ukraine and increasing energy prices, especially on the east coast of Australia, but I urge you to leave the ban in place. Instead, we can reserve some energy supplies for locals once existing contracts end and invest in renewable energy backed by battery technology.

Thank you for listening to my concerns.