

Submission to the Inquiry on the **Environment and Other Legislation Amendment (Removing Nuclear Energy Prohibitions) Bill 2022**

2 January 2023

I was part of a group which visited Japan after the 2011 Fukushima nuclear power station meltdown. In Sendai, and in Canberra, we listened to days of presentations on the costs and benefits of nuclear power.

It became clear that there was only one reason for any country to go down the road of nuclear power, and that was to acquire nuclear weapons at some point in the future. The reasons against doing this are obvious, and it vexes me that the idea that we might take up nuclear power as an energy source continues to be dug up and considered again.

Nuclear power is expensive and slow to build;

- is impossible to get out of once you have nuclear power stations to keep watch over;
- puts people's health and safety at risk -- research is showing that even low levels of radiation are harmful;
- raises terrifying possibilities of annihilation of large areas of the planet;
- requires transparent operation practices but is inherently secretive due to security concerns;
- and attracts private investors who operate under the assumption that they will not be liable if things should go terribly wrong (they will have made their money, and the public will foot the long-term bill).

Should anything go wrong, as we saw in Fukushima, we will need to have in reserve large numbers of trained workers to go in, incurring certain damage to their health and in some cases their lives, to try to fix the damage.

Decommissioning of nuclear facilities and disposal of nuclear waste are still not resolved anywhere, and so far, experience suggests that those with the weakest political clout may see a nuclear dump in their territory. This may be us, one day.

Nuclear power plants can be threatened and used as bargaining chips by criminal actors as is feared in the Ukraine.

In short, given that we must proceed very fast to move over to a sustainable and much cheaper energy system, putting nuclear power back on the agenda is an expensive waste of money and time, and I suspect is being done for reasons which would not stand up to public scrutiny.

The public wants a sustainable and benign energy system, and a government which will provide this. Please let this be the government that understands this and acts accordingly.