



Dissenting Report—Australian Greens

The Australian Greens strongly dissent from the recommendation accepted by the Coalition and Labor Party on the merits of a uranium supply agreement between Australia and the UAE.

This recommendation continues an entrenched pattern of ignoring unambiguous evidence of social, economic and environmental harm caused by the nuclear industry. The last time the Australian Senate conducted an inquiry into the uranium sector in Australia was 2003. It found “a pattern of underperformance and non-compliance” and the threat of “serious or irreversible damage” if industry practices did not change.

Needless to say, industry practices deteriorated and regulators have taken an ever-lighter touch, culminating in the spillage of more than 1.3 million litres of acidic radioactive sludge at the Ranger mine in Kakadu National Park in December 2013.

Regarding the security implications of selling this material into the volatile Middle East, the majority report of the committee documents cogent and well-informed cautions from a range of civil society organisations and then sidelines them entirely. The committee’s recommendation ignores the fact that the nuclear weapons programs of countries including India and North Korea grew out of ostensibly ‘peaceful’ nuclear energy programs. It ignores the fact that journalists, whistleblowers and those with an alternate point of view as to the risks of nuclear power do not enjoy the democratic protections we take for granted in Australia. It ignores the evident fact that following the Fukushima disaster, nuclear energy has again been proven an unsafe and uneconomic energy source.

Despite the weight of evidence, the committee is waving through this agreement with its eyes closed, subordinating risks to international security, public health, worker safety and environmental protection to the short term demands of a failing industry.

Senator Scott Ludlam