

**Submission
No 5**

**INQUIRY INTO URANIUM MINING AND NUCLEAR
FACILITIES (PROHIBITIONS) REPEAL BILL 2019**

Name: Mr Grant Mistler

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Dear Standing Committee on State Development

Re: Uranium Mining and Nuclear Facilities (Prohibitions) Repeal Bill 2019

Thank you the time you have taken to consult in relation to the terms of reference of your inquiry.

I wish to lend support towards the repeal of the Uranium Mining and Nuclear Facilities (Prohibitions) Act 1986. My stance to repeal the Act is due to the fact that Act was quickly developed and assented to in the same year as the Chernobyl accident in April 1986. That response may have been a 'kneejerk reaction' to the failures of those communist soviet standards and safeguards in order to "protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of New South Wales and the environment in which they live", as set out in the Objects of Act.

History however has shown no such similar accident has occurred in the last three decades in those former communist soviet countries, which should be the benchmark of worst case scenarios, due to their political instabilities, and their substandard technologies and infrastructure. In comparison, the 58 nuclear reactors in France, with many near the wine regions of France, and the eight nuclear reactors in Sweden, do not rate a second thought by anyone. No one is boycotting French wine. Britain conducted nine nuclear bomb tests in South Australia, and no one is boycotting South Australian wine. People would not know what Maralinga means.

Australia has the largest known deposits of uranium in the world, and our uranium exports can compete with countries that have unstable governments, as an ethical alternative. Kazakhstan has 12% of the world's uranium resources, and there is high Chinese government involvement there to tap in to that resource. The Indian government – the world's largest democracy – is committed to growing its nuclear power capacity as part of its massive infrastructure development program.

Namibia is able to provide 10% of world mining output, and China is interested in acquiring more uranium from Namibia. While China is currently purchasing Namibian uranium mines to guarantee their energy security, Namibia cannot export uranium to India due to the Pelindaba Treaty that they ratified in 1996. Australia can become a viable and trusted alternative to support India's growth.

To focus on the "health, safety and welfare of the people of New South Wales", the maximum penalty for building a nuclear facility is only 1,000 penalty units, and there is no mention of imprisonment or being liable to losing Australian citizenship, so that threshold is already quite low. There is also an inbuilt incongruency, as the Act expressly allows the Commonwealth to build a nuclear facility in NSW, and that automatically negates the Objects of Act to "protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of New South Wales and the environment in which they live".

On a final note to support my case, the long-term health effects of fine particle emissions below 2.5 microns (PM2.5) in size were unknown in 1986. This is now an emerging research area of known

health risks. A recent research report from Dr Ben Ewald, a Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle School of Medicine and Public Health, claims burning coal for electricity generation in NSW contributes towards 279 premature deaths, 361 people who develop diabetes, and 233 underweight babies, annually. Building a nuclear facility would therefore “protect the health, safety and welfare of the people of New South Wales”, in comparison to burning coal for electricity.

Nuclear facilities produce zero fine particle emissions. The health burden of fine particle pollution from electricity generation in NSW, as indicated in the research reports below, cannot be ignored.

I welcome the inquiry, and I look forward to receiving your final report.

Yours faithfully

Grant Mistler

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