



People for Nuclear Disarmament (WA)

Newsletter Early 2012

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Dear members and supporters, please mark these TWO dates in your diaries – and support these PND events if you can. **Both are on corner of Hay & William Streets in Perth, 12 noon - 2pm.** Thanks again to Wesley Church for permission to use this space.

Tuesday March 13 A vigil to mark first anniversary of the **FUKUSHIMA** accident. *Please note that there will also be an event on the actual anniversary date of Sunday, March 11th at Perth Cultural Centre, 1-5pm. Live music, film, speakers, origami, public art. For more information, see 11March.com

Tuesday, April 24 A remembrance and action for the 26th anniversary of **CHERNOBYL**. (NB. Actual anniversary date is April 26th.)

CHERNOBYL'S FALLOUT GOES ON AND ON



This is PND's friend, **Dr Ludmilla Zhirina**, a retired Professor of Biology at Bryansk State University in Russia. She coordinates the NGO, Viola which was established in response to the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster to provide educational resources for people living in affected areas. To this end, Ludmila and her team work tirelessly. The house and land behind her is part realisation of her long-held dream – to obtain a relatively uncontaminated place in which to develop community education work. With some financial assistance from PND (WA) as well as other organisations, Viola has managed to purchase the house and land. Here people will be taught how to avoid radioactively contaminated food and water or wood. Ludmilla and other Viola members are especially concerned about women's reproductive health and run open seminars and individual consultations to educate women about these impacts.

Ludmila has researched and produced a book, *Chernobyl: Through the Eyes of Children* which has recently been released through LIONap.com and is available on iBookstore. In this 56 page publication, she has documented the continuing effects of environmental radioactive contamination on the lands, forests and bodies of the people of the region; also on their psychological health, especially on how young people are dealing with issues that children elsewhere never have to imagine. She was devastated at news of the Fukushima catastrophe year, thinking of the whole impact starting anew in a different population.

Her book includes art, poetry and other writings of children from her programme. It is a poignant wake-up call to all of the risks inherent in using nuclear power and the dreadful consequences resulting from incidents like Chernobyl and Fukushima. It is a strong plea for us to think and act to leave a better world for our children and future generations.

The book can be downloaded on iPhone, iPad or iPod touch with iBooks and on computers with iTunes. It must be read on an iOS device. We do hope that some of you members 'out there' will be able to follow up by reading Ludmila's book and tell others about it – especially anyone you know who fails yet to understand the wisdom of turning away from nuclear power. In the light of Chernobyl & Fukushima, please renew your efforts to persuade both the Federal Labor Government and the Opposition to reconsider their policies for uranium mining and sales, and their support for nuclear energy and industry. While congratulating Labor on passing the Clean Energy Future Bill to usher in a price on carbon here, we must urgently insist upon their dedicated support for renewable energy technologies.

The health impact of Chernobyl remains poorly researched. The full assessment of the health consequences such as cancers and birth defects has been thwarted by pro-nuclear lobby groups that have made a battleground of attempts to do this research. It is high time that Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' was thrown into history's rubbish bin.

***** Dear Members and others who receive PND's newsletter. In consideration of our postage costs and saving paper, (trees!) if you would be happy to have it emailed to you, please let us know by contacting our office.**

REACTING TO FUKUSHIMA'S REACTORS

While Fukushima news is fading out of our media, the first anniversary will be a chance to renew our community's grasp of its many implications for the global energy future. We urge all our members and supporters to make the most of this 'moment' by talking more to family and friends, by writing letters to newspaper editors, by urging pro-uranium mining, pro-nuclear power politicians to understand that the energy road ahead must depend as far as possible on renewable energy – not nuclear power (or fossil fuelled energy sources.) Please give your support to at least one of the two events marking the first anniversary of the Fukushima catastrophe. (See notice above & separate flier.)

The Fukushima experience, just 25 years after Chernobyl, is surely a compelling motivator to re-energise us to being the best advocates for a renewable energy future that we each can be. We can gain strength from a change that is taking place in Japan where once the public by and large had accepted the Government line that nuclear power and nuclear weapons were unrelated questions. Many of the Hibakusha (victims of the nuclear holocausts of 1945) had been avidly pro-nuclear disarmament but not critical of nuclear power. The Fukushima accident changed this situation, with many more people questioning whether *any* use of nuclear energy can really be safe, and the two movements are finally beginning to join forces.

Two personal responses to Fukushima follow to inspire you

Back in September 2011, a 50,000-strong rally in Tokyo, organised by Sayonara Genpatsu ('Goodbye Nuclear Plants') saw Japanese mainstream media start taking this movement seriously as it became clear that 'ordinary people', not just 'professional activists' were protesting. The initial shock and inertia were giving way to an unprecedented activism among the usually 'obedient' Japanese.

One of the speakers at this rally, a woman from Fukushima, Muto Ruiko (Rui-chan) of Hairo Action Fukushima ("Decommission the Reactors Action Fukushima") made a deeply impressing speech which powered its way to hearts. Mothers of Fukushima and elsewhere around the country were becoming the backbone of the movement. Rui-chan's speech was simply about the hard realities of life since 11th March 2011 for the people of her city. She did not take up the 'victim position', but rather asked for everyone's help in backing the leadership of the people of Fukushima and Tohoku, rather than saving them.

Rui-chan had come to this rally with busloads of others from Fukushima prefecture, many being evacuees. They had "reached out, invited each other along" to tell the story about the grief caused by the accident at the nuclear plant in Fukushima... and said that "we are determined that we, of all people, will raise our voices to say that we do not want nuclear reactors."

She started by expressing respect for each person for tackling so many difficult things each day since 3/11, in order to protect life, and gratitude to all who had warmly reached out to connect with the people of Fukushima prefecture with support. She expressed a deep apology to children and young people from the generation that brought about such a situation.

Fukushima is a very beautiful place, she explained. Eastern parts overlook the deep blue Pacific Ocean while other parts are treasure-houses of fruits, peaches, pears and apples and golden rice stalks. "This land, with its blue mountains and clear water," said Rui-chan, "is our homeland." Then came March 11th, a turning-point. Radiation, invisible to the eye, descended on this landscape ... ***"and we too became hibakusha."***

She described the widespread confusion – in a rapidly rolled-out "safety campaign" - and feelings of alarm, and connections between people being torn apart. "Who can say how many people worried and grieved - in our localities, our workplaces, our schools, our homes? Day after day, many

inescapable decisions were forced upon us. To flee, or not to flee? To eat, or not to eat? To hang the laundry outside, or not to hang it outside? To make our children wear masks, or not to make them? To plough our fields, or not to plough them? To speak out about something, or to remain silent? There were various agonising decisions."

To Rui-chan, the following things had become clear:

The truth of the situation was being hidden
The country was not protecting its citizens
The accident was still not over
The inhabitants of Fukushima prefecture were being made the subjects of a nuclear experiment
A huge volume of radioactive waste remained
Despite the enormous price that we have already paid, there are powers that are intent on driving nuclear power production forward
We have been discarded

Rui-chan continued: We heave deep sighs of exhaustion and overwhelming sadness. But the words that spill from our mouths are "Don't you dare treat us like fools!", "Don't snatch away our lives!"

In the midst of our anger and grief, we, the citizens of Fukushima prefecture, are quietly rising up - Mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers, wanting to protect their children, the young generation, fighting to stop their future from being stolen, workers trying to help those cleaning up the stricken nuclear plant, exposed to huge doses of radiation in the process, farmers filled with despair at the contamination of their land, people with disabilities, determined that the radiation should not give rise to a new discrimination and separation...

One by one, each of us citizens is asking questions about the responsibility of the state, and of *TEPCO. And we are raising our voices to say "No more nuclear reactors!" We have become the demons of Tohoku, quietly burning with fury.

We, the people of Fukushima, want to share our suffering, responsibility and hope, and to support each other as we move forward with our lives, whether we have left our hometowns or have stayed in our land. Please join with us. Please take note of the action that we are undertaking. We are learning about negotiations with the government, evacuation rulings, temporary evacuation, recovering our health, decontamination, measurement of radiation levels, nuclear reactors and radioactivity. And we are going everywhere to tell people about Fukushima.

There is one more thing that I want to talk about, which is how we each live our lives. We need to imagine the world on the far side of that socket into which we plug things so heedlessly. We need to put our minds on the fact that convenience and development come at the price of discrimination and sacrificing people. Nuclear power plants are on the far side of that socket. The human race is no more than one species among the living creatures on this earth. Is there any other species that usurps its own future? I want to live as a living being should, in harmony with this beautiful planet. Although it may be a small thing, I want to treat energy as a precious resource, and weave an ingenious, rich, creative life.

How can we build a new world that is the polar opposite of one reliant on nuclear reactors? Nobody knows the full answer to that. What I think we can do is for each one of us, in complete and total earnest, to think with our own minds, make sure to open our eyes wide, decide what we can do, and act on it, rather than following what someone else has decided. Let's remember that each one of us has that power.

Every one of us has the courage to change. Let us reclaim the confidence that was taken from us. And then, let us connect with each other. If the power that even now aims to advance nuclear plants is a vertical wall looming over us, our power extends horizontally, without limits, through our ongoing connection.

Try reaching out and gently holding the hand of the person next to you. Let's look at each other, and listen to each other's pain. Let's allow each other's anger and tears. Let's spread the warmth of these hands we're holding now throughout Japan and the world.

However overwhelmingly heavy the burden each one of us has to bear, however rough the road that we have to travel, let us support each other so that we do not lose sight of our goal, and let us live through this time freely and blithely.”

Thank you for your words of hope and power, Ruiko-chan!

* Tokyo Electric Power Corporation, the company that owns the Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear power plant



Inspiration No.2 comes from PND (WA)'s great friend **Felicity Hill** who was part of an international delegation made up speakers from the **Global Conference for a Nuclear Power Free World**, which met in mid-January in Yokohama to study the impact of Fukushima on the Japanese and to help the world to understand. They visited **Fukushima City**, which is 60km from the nuclear power plant but received a large dose of fallout; **Date City**, which includes a large community of evacuees living in temporary housing; and **Minamisoma City**, which is right on the border of the 20km "exclusion zone" around the stricken power plant.

Felicity wrote, *“In a country as technically sophisticated as Japan, the mess, the misinformation and the conditions people are living under in the radiation affected zones is deeply shocking. 160,000 people are still radioactive refugees. The acceptable radiation limit in the region has been increased to the same level permitted for nuclear workers — so from 1 to 20 milisieverts per year.*

“The snow outside our hotel in Fukushima City had a radiation reading higher than the Rum Jungle uranium site — a filthy 1950s mine site in the Northern Territory that the Australian government has budgeted \$8 million over four years just to work out how to clean up. Fukushima City is a

patchwork of hot spots. Children cannot play outside. Think for a moment what that is doing to families and the children's unexercised little bodies.

“The delegation was forced to think not only about the physical damage done, the evacuees, the people who cannot evacuate because they have nowhere to go or no money to get out and the splitting up of families (which happened to 93 per cent of 30,000 people surveyed by one NGO) but also about the social impact of a whole region losing its key industries of tourism and agriculture.

“The persimmons on the trees in the evacuated zones we drove through were bright red and rotting with radiation. Decontamination teams — masked men in the kind of white suits I have often worn to demonstrations — were hard at work. But there is no template, there is no proven methodology for the work they are doing, and one snow storm can rain down fresh radiation and undo what has just been cleaned.

“While they are keeping meticulous records that will benefit future generations, I worried very much for their safety. They badly need radiation experts and equipment. So much of the decontamination work is being done by NGOs and volunteers. They have sought funding from the government to do the work, but they are not under the auspices of any authority, they just doing it because they want the children to be able to play again, and politicians to stop calling their home towns Cities of Death. (One minister resigned for making this gaff).

“We were told by Citizens Radioactivity Measuring Station, the Fukushima University Disaster Recover Institute that the IAEA have sent two investigation teams to the area but there is no systematic non-government or government inspection or testing of human health, soil, air and water in the area.

“We were told about the programs established by some new NGOs to fund opportunities for children to get a break from the radiation and rebuild their iodine levels, but also that locals make terrible accusations to those families who do leave for a while. They are traitors and hysterical, they worry too much. At the same time, a new form of discrimination is growing in Japan — those from the region are seen as contaminated people. In response to this stigma and fear there is a form of local patriotism that has people insisting that their food is safe, that it is the right thing to do to support the community by eating it and buying other products from the region.

“One hero we met at Date City is Mr. Hasegawa, a dairy farmer who spoke of being in Fukushima City and learning of the very high radiation that fell on his village. He was instructed by authorities not to tell anyone. He went straight home, called a meeting and told his neighbours that up to 40 microsieverts had dropped on them. He convened a meeting of the dairy farmers of the region and they realised that they could not in good conscience continue to produce dairy products. He showed us photos of him pushing his cows onto trucks for slaughter - and shared the suicide note of a friend, a dairy farmer who left a seven and five-year-old son. It read:

"Thank you for looking after me. I have reached my limit. 10 June. I am sorry. If only there were no nuclear power plants. To the remaining dairy farmers I wish that you don't give up and that you fight the nuclear power plants. Sorry to leave you behind. I have lost my will to work."

Minamisoma City is on the coast right near the 20km exclusion zone around the Fukushima nuclear plant. The exclusion zone border is heavily policed. Many people from here fled to Fukushima City but realised that in fact radiation doses here are lower than in Fukushima, which is 60km away from the plant and over a mountain. The woman from the NGO Minamisoma People Unite wept when she told us, "this is not a city of death, this is our home". The employment and industry here has plummeted.

The work of Japanese NGOs has been incredible. The Friends of Natural Mothering were basically a breastfeeding promotion network but have become a support network for women coping with pregnancy in the radiation affected regions — providing information and opportunities to get out. They work to bring children out of the toxic zones. Another Japanese NGO had been supporting the cancer victims in Iraq arising from the use of depleted uranium during the first Gulf War. Those children have now grown up and one of them has been doing a series of piano concerts to support the people of Fukushima.

Governments have colluded with the nuclear industry to systematically lie about the impact of radiation. The fact that it took over two months for the Japanese Government to admit that meltdown had occurred — a fact known within 48 hours of the earthquake hitting — is a total outrage. There were serious delays in telling people what they needed to know in order to protect themselves."

Thanks Felicity for this insightful account. We now have confirmation that Australian uranium had fuelled those fateful reactors of Fukushima. In 2008 when the Barnett Coalition Government took power in WA, the ban on uranium mining in this state was lifted. One major contribution we PNDers can make towards a non-nuclear future is so obvious – to prevent uranium mining ever starting up in Western Australia. PLEASE THINK OF THE PEOPLE OF CHERNOBYL AND FUKUSHIMA AND ALL OTHERS AROUND THE WORLD AFFECTED BY THOSE TWO NUCLEAR CATASTROPHES AS YOU COLLECT MORE SIGNATURES ON THE PETITION TO RESTORE THE BAN ON URANIUM MINING IN WA. Contact PND's office (Tel: 9271 8786) for more petitions – and please keep them rolling in.

Foot Note: The Fukushima nuclear disaster is continuing to spread radiation contamination throughout Japan. Reports are still coming through of food throughout the whole of Japan being contaminated and TEPCO having to inject more boric acid in to one of the reactors as temperatures were rising again. (mid-February)



One of Viola's community education meetings to help people in Chernobyl-affected areas cope with ongoing radioactive contamination.

Stop mucking up Muckaty

The pressure to use Muckaty Station as Australia's first radioactive waste dump mounts. Steering the process is myopic and single-minded Minister for Resources, Martin Ferguson. In February, NT Labor Senator Trish Crossin said legislation (National Radioactive Waste Management bill) paving its way must pass quickly and is not dependent on the outcome of a court case through which a group of Aboriginal traditional owners is challenging the nomination of Muckaty Station to host the dump. If enabling legislation is passed, it would hand virtually unchecked power in the hands of one Minister, currently guess who!

As well as strong resistance by the TOs, the Federal push (with Resources Minister Martin Ferguson doing a great deal of the pushing) is opposed elsewhere in the NT. Chief Minister Paul Henderson finds offensive a Federal Govt. offer (bribe?) to give the NT \$10 million if it accepts a nuclear dump. But Country Liberals Senator Nigel Scullion has struck a deal with the Federal Government to accept two amendments to laws allowing a dump to be built at Muckaty. One creates a \$10 m. fund for health education & infrastructure for the jurisdiction that accepts the waste facility.

The Australian Greens are trying to amend proposed laws to establish a nuclear waste dump at Muckaty. Senator Scott Ludlam is arguing that Federal Parliament should not deal with the issue until the outcome of the Federal Court case to determine which Aboriginal groups are the area's rightful custodians, is determined. The Greens plan to push amendments to include more appeal rights to bring the bill into line with modern environmental laws, and also to raise the issue of finding alternatives to using Muckaty Station.

Senator Ludlam rightly points to a report to the US Energy Secretary in January by the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. This strongly recommended a 'consent-based approach to siting nuclear waste storage... noting that 'trying to force such facilities on unwilling communities has not worked'. In fact, Labor's actual stated policy aims to "establish a consensual process of site selection, which looks to... the centrality of community consultation and support." Sadly Mr Ferguson chooses to ignore that, probably counting on the NT having less power compared to SA which resisted a nuclear waste dump and won.

There should be no movement towards establishing the waste dump before the legal case over it is resolved – but while Labor leadership battle was being fought through the Gillard-won ballot on Feb 27, the NRWM Bill was debated in the Senate. Debate over the Greens' proposed amendments followed next day with 11 voting in favour but 70 against. The whole Bill will again be debated sometime in the week following that (but too late to report in this newsletter.) Keep your eye on the media for the outcome.

Ever-hopeful Dave Sweeney of the Australian Conservation Foundation said, "It's a long way from a bad law to an operating dump site, and our shared continuing efforts will derail the Muckaty plan and change the debate on radioactive waste management."

We are assured by medical experts that we do not need a reactor in Australia to make medical isotopes. This dump is not about 'low level medical waste' - but high level waste

which is scheduled to land in Australia from the UK and France within the next few years.

NUCLEAR SUBS FOR AUSTRALIA?

It has been proposed that the Australia Navy buy a couple of nuclear submarines. Fortunately, the Labor Government is opposed – and The Greens certainly see no merit in such a move. Unsurprisingly Tony Abbott and the Coalition are willing to “consider the nuclear option.”

We’ve no expertise in the nuclear industry, meaning such subs would have to be serviced at a US base somewhere in the Pacific – or a US submarine base would have to be built in Australia. Another problem is the price tag at \$2.5 billion each for the giant Virginia Class nuclear submarine. As Senator Scott Ludlam pointed out, the Gonski report recommended an additional \$5 billion for the nation's schools. Education or nuclear submarines? That is the question – along with the fact that the subs could well fan tensions in our region.

OUR FRIEND JOHN OWEN, 1940-2012



For those who might not yet know of the sudden, extremely unexpected death of our great friend, John Owen, on New Years Day, we must sadly pass on this news. John, a gentle man and a loving grandfather, was a great activist for a world with more peace and less war, and for safe renewable energy, not those “old nags” as he called nuclear and fossil fuels. He supported many of our events – including being a regular peace vigil participant every 2nd and 4th Tuesday on “Wesley Corner” where he’d spend his lunchtime collecting signatures on the petition to ban uranium mining in WA. A well-read, thoughtful and thought-provoking man, he also initiated many actions and strategies of his own towards that peaceful, non-nuclear future that we all long for. He was outstanding at street theatre, creating many of his roles himself, infecting us all with his quaint sense of humour. He was a very special person, and will be greatly missed. [PND\(WA\) extends sympathy to his wife Muriel and family.](#)

HIGHS & LOWS WITH OBAMA

Last November when President Obama finally visited Australia, we were dismayed to see him announcing increased US military activity in our country.

Jo Vallentine, co-convenor of PND(WA), immediately put out a media release stating “This is entirely the wrong

message to be sending to our regional neighbours who look to us for friendship and trade, not a military build-up,” and further that “Australia has no natural enemies, but this provocative kind of action is enough to sow seeds of mistrust, and to suggest to our neighbours that we are blindly following United States policies and an agenda which might include war with China. We should not try to play a double game by extending the hand of friendship, and acting in a threatening manner simultaneously.

“We don’t want to follow the United States blindly into any more wars of their making – we should be extricating ourselves from the debilitating ten year debacle of Afghanistan, and learning from that mistake.

“We don’t want more ships, more troops, more war exercises, greater access to Australian bases. It’s bad enough that we engage in the bi-annual Talisman Sabre exercises, at great cost to our pockets and to the environment, and that we host Pine Gap to do the United States spy work for them, and that we open again North-West Cape to be used for their war agenda.

“And it is outrageous that our visiting master from over the seas comes bearing bad news as though it’s a gift to us! Surely, if announcements of increased military presence are to be made, the Australian Prime Minister should be the one doing the announcing. Does our sovereignty mean absolutely nothing?

Jo Vallentine concluded: “We should be using our resources more wisely to deal with real risks to Australia, like food security and climate change events by creating a real defence force, instead of being a subservient arm of the most aggressive, offensive force currently waging war on this planet.”

.....
...and yet here’s another side to that first black President of the USA who first delighted us so well with his vision of a world freed of nukes.

In mid-February, Associated Press reported that that the Obama administration is examining options for deep cuts in the US nuclear arsenal. According to the report, the administration is considering options for three levels of cuts in deployed strategic nuclear weapons: 1,000 to 1,100; 700 to 800; and 300 to 400. As our friends in the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation said, any decrease in the size of the US nuclear arsenal would be a step in the right direction, but **the lower level being considered would be a major step toward a world free of nuclear weapons.** If it implemented this major change, the US would be acting in accordance with its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The same obligation applies to Russia, the UK, France and China.

If President Obama is successful in reducing the size of the US nuclear arsenal to 300 to 400 weapons and bringing the Russians along with the US, this will leave the other seven countries in possession of nuclear weapons roughly at parity

with between 100 and 300 nuclear weapons each. **This would be a strong place from which to launch multi-lateral negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention**, a treaty for the phased, verifiable, irreversible, transparent elimination of nuclear weapons. Such a Convention would be a great achievement for humanity and a gift to ourselves and the generations that will follow us on the planet.

Would that President Obama's anti-militarism was more comprehensive and consistent!

In January, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, after analysing the risks of nuclear war and climate change, moved the hands of its 'Doomsday Clock' from six to five minutes to midnight.....

JULIA GILLARD OKAYS URANIUM FOR INDIA

With the old strains in the relationship between India and Pakistan, it is most unfortunate that the Prime Minister decided to end Labor's 40 year-long position on banning the export of uranium to India. Both countries are outside the NPT. Both have nuclear power. Both are aggressive makers of nuclear warheads and continue to test their nuclear missiles. Our uranium exports to India would undermine the NPT and the campaign for nuclear disarmament, and encourage a regional nuclear arms race.

On the very day that our PM announced her decision early last December at the ALP conference in Sydney, India again tested its Agni-4 missile. Should the 200+ nuclear warheads on the subcontinent be used, many millions of people would die. The impact of the soot from burning cities would cause severe climate effects that would cool Earth for over a decade, destroying agriculture and the ozone layer, according to John Hallam of FOE/Nuclear Flashpoints.

While we're all very concerned about climate change, this is not the way to fix it!

Senator Scott Ludlam said that selling uranium to India, a non-NPT signatory, is unethical, illogical and probably illegal under the Treaty of Rarotonga, signed by the Australian government in 1985. ANU Professor of International Law, Nicholas Rothwell, has confirmed that to be the case.

There's a huge mass movement growing in India against nuclear power. There have been campaigns - including hunger strikes - against nuclear power in Koodankulam, Tamil Nadu; Jaitapur, Maharashtra & Gorakhpur, Haryana.

"Selling uranium to India will increase the proliferation of nuclear weapons in our region" said K. Subrahmanyam, former head of the Indian National Security Advisory Board, adding "It is to India's advantage to categorise as many power reactors as possible as civilian ones to be refuelled by imported uranium and conserve our native uranium fuel for weapons grade plutonium production."

Freeing up domestic uranium for India's weapons program is a very serious possible consequence of uranium exports to India. However, we also must consider the record of that country's dangerous civilian nuclear sector.

To again quote Senator Ludlam, "One of India's pioneer nuclear scientists and formerly a member of India's Atomic Energy Commission, Dr MP Parameswaran, recently said India should suspend its entire nuclear program, saying 'Has the issue of final disposal of radioactive waste been solved? Has the possibility of nuclear accidents either due to human or mechanical or natural causes been totally prevented? The answer is no.'"

Australian uranium is sold to 14 countries, the US and UK, France, Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Spain, Sweden, Germany, Belgium, Finland, Canada and South Africa. Let's not add to the dangers of both nuclear power and weapons by adding India to this list.

New START?

On the first anniversary of the Entry-into-Force of the bilateral **New START**, (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), 85 prominent individuals (including 4 Nobel Prize winners and one Nobel Prize winning organisation) and major nongovernmental organisations sent an **OPEN LETTER** to Presidents **Obama** and **Medvedev**, Senate and Duma Committees, and key policy-makers, urging that US and NATO plans for missile defence must not be allowed to derail progress to nuclear disarmament and abolition. PND(WA) was among the 35 NGOs, endorsing the Letter – and we were in very fine company indeed.

The Letter expressed grave concerns at recent US decisions to deploy an integrated missile defence system in Western, Eastern and South Eastern Europe, coupled with the continued expansion of NATO and its military activities. This has created increasingly sharp divisions and distrust between the Russian Federation and the US, threatens to destroy the New START agreement and to reverse previous progress toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. It could return the world to a Cold War.

Russia perceives the missile defence system to be "a U.S. system on European soil" fearing among other aspects, planned deployment of very advanced-stage Standard Missile-3 land-based interceptors which could target Russia's strategic nuclear missiles. The US argues that the planned interceptors are necessary to defend against yet-to-be-developed Iranian long-range ballistic missiles. Yet American scientists have stated that forward-based European radar systems would enable the US to track Russian ICBMs very early after a launch and to guide interceptors against them.

Both USA and Russia still maintain strategic war plans that include large nuclear strike options, with hundreds of pre-planned targets that clearly include cities in each other's nation. Both keep a total of at least 1,700 strategic nuclear weapons mounted on launch-ready ballistic missiles, which can carry out these strike options with only a few minutes' warning.

The final stages of deployment of the US/NATO missile defence system appear to many Russians to be designed to greatly reduce or eliminate Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent and so the mutual suspicion and mistrust continue to grow. Despite the end of the Cold War, Russia was never made a full partner in NATO which has expanded eastwards,

absorbing former members of the old Warsaw Pact. Last November, President Medvedev warned that Russia would withdraw from the New START agreement should the US/NATO missile defence system continue to move forward. Such a move could precipitate a fully-renewed nuclear arms race and thus completely reverse movement toward a world without nuclear weapons. Many of the signatories of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) would also regard the collapse of the New START process as an explicit violation of the NPT. This could lead to the collapse of the NPT and extensive nuclear proliferation.

The leaders of the US, NATO and Russia must seriously consider the possibility that the current course of political events is pushing them towards eventual military confrontation and conflict. Further expansion of NATO, its “nuclear umbrella” and missile defence system to the very borders of Russia increase the odds that any conventional military confrontation would quickly escalate into nuclear war, and a ‘nuclear winter’ would follow leading to global famine and starvation.

The Letter suggested the following steps be taken:

- A freeze on US/NATO deployment of missile defences in Europe pending an open, joint US-Russian quantitative assessment of threats that missile defence is supposed to counter, and of the threats posed by US and Russian tactical and strategic nuclear forces.
- The threats posed by missile defence and its effectiveness should be studied and integrated into that assessment, including a thorough scientific evaluation of the long-term effects of nuclear conflict upon the global environment, climate and human agriculture.
- Launch-ready nuclear arsenals be immediately stood-down, and that nuclear arsenals be eliminated – the top priority.

It is vital that both sides feel their concerns are being respected and that their security interests have been properly taken into account. An outcome that advantages one side only, or that is perceived as doing so, is no solution at all.

As ‘people for nuclear disarmament’, there is clearly a need for us to continue our quest. Thanks to all those who support us with your subs renewals and participate in our shared work towards a nuclear-weapons-free world in all your many & wonderful ways.

Walk Away from Uranium Mining asks TORO to walk away too

The WALKERS somewhere between Merredin and Southern Cross during their epic 10-week journey from Wiluna to Kalgoorley to Perth



Welcome back, heroes! After ten weeks and more than 1,250 kilometres, the walking protest against opening Western Australia to uranium mining arrived in CHOIGM-saturated Perth in late October last year.



John Owen on LHS and Jo Vallentine holding middle of the BUMP banner as we gathered at City Farm before the last leg of the WALK into Perth 28 October 2011

The **Walk Away from Uranium Mining** began at the site of **TORO ENERGY’s** proposed Wiluna uranium mine in central WA, which if approved will be the first of its kind in WA’s history. Out of the five planned uranium projects begun in WA since the Barnett Government overturned the ban on uranium mining, the Wiluna proposal is currently the most advanced. However, it is unlikely any uranium project will be approved before the next state election.

Footprints for Peace spokesperson and WALK organiser Marcus Atkinson, who walked the whole journey, said, “We left Wiluna just days after the Toro submission opened for public comment and will arrive the day before submissions close. Like so many big miners before them, Toro have been making a lot of promises about the benefits the mine will bring. But on our travels through the heartland of the mining industry in WA we saw plenty of extreme poverty and social problems despite the huge mineral wealth being dug up. Toro are promising the world but all we could see was the spread of division in communities.”

Monash University mining rehabilitation expert Dr Gavin Mudd, said, “In the Wiluna mining application, Toro Energy suggests uranium mining is safe. This ignores the countless breaches at Australia’s operating uranium mines and the legacy left behind by closed mines, including radioactive water contamination, leaks, spills and fires. Toro must also stop promulgating the myth that the Wiluna region is naturally elevated in radioactivity as this is patently untrue. It is deeply concerning that Toro is misrepresenting the truth of radiation and already seems to be covering itself against future leaks.”

Nuclear Free Campaigner for the Conservation Council of WA Mia Pepper said, “In a recent Auditor General’s report it was clear that the mining sector in WA is failing on every level to enforce environmental standards in the mines we already have. It is absurd to think our government might then approve a uranium mine with minimal environmental studies, a poor understanding of the background radiation and no plans for the inevitable nuclear accidents.

“WA is not equipped for this uranium mine, nor is it ready for the four other uranium mines in the assessment process. The Wiluna mine is the thin edge of the nuclear wedge in WA and we want the government to know that we’re determined to keep this toxic industry out of our state.”

Uranium mining is a difficult and dangerous industry **that 60% of West Australians don’t even know could soon be happening in our state.** Even ignoring the huge risks associated with the mine itself, every tonne of ore extracted from Wiluna will need to be trucked thousands of kilometres

on WA roads before it can be exported. Just one accident, one tired driver or obstacle on the road and we would have a serious radioactive emergency.

In the political sphere, The Greens remain implacably opposed to uranium mining. Last June at its State Conference, Labor under Leader Eric Ripper reaffirmed its NO U-MINES policy and committed to maintaining that if elected to govern WA. It also strengthened the Party's renewable energy target and promised to continue support for a national price on carbon pollution. In January, new Labor leader Mark McGowan declared his position on uranium mining in this State and that **included a public inquiry into the industry and a containment policy for uranium mines approved under the Barnett Government.**

In the meantime, Premier Barnett's eager crew presses forth on devising a regulatory regime to enable this new industry to start in WA –and continues to refuse to hold an open public inquiry into the industry, despite the wide range of sectors strongly urging that independent inquiry process. Hence, would-be uranium mining companies should understand that any uranium mines approved by the current State Government will be contested on the basis of a fundamentally insufficient approval process.

However, unless the Barnett Government allows mines to be approved without an adequate, thorough assessment process, there should be no operating uranium mines here before the next State election in March 2012.

As PND members are better informed than most of the general public on the dangers of mining uranium – and its downstream consequences, it's up to us to spread that information in our communities. Take heart – and take action. It's not too late.

THE KOBE FORMULA

With the escalation in US military activities around Australia, we might look to the City of KOBE in Japan for inspiration when US Navy vessels come to Fremantle to pay us a call!

So, what's the NUCLEAR-FREE KOBE FORMULA? For the past 37 years, all foreign warships entering the Port of Kobe have been required to submit certification that there are no nuclear weapons on board. This procedure, "Kobe Houshiki" (meaning Nuclear-Free Kobe Formula), is based on a 1975 resolution of the City Council and has since been a symbol of Japan's three principles on nuclear weapons ~ not to possess, not to manufacture or not to allow the entry of nuclear weapons.

The anniversary of this courageous example of challenging the US Navy's nuclear arsenal is a special moment to applaud the City of Kobe – and PND (WA) sent a message of congratulation and thanks to Shushi Kajimoto, the Secretary General of the Hyogo Council Against A & H Bombs. Over the years, the City of Kobe has endured much harassment over its ruling – so it's important to send the City encouragement to maintain the strong resolve they have unswervingly shown.

Shushi Kajimoto's gracious reply was that our message "to Kobe was a great encouragement to us all. Let us work together for a world free from nuclear weapons."

The Kobe Formula anniversary falls on March 10 – one day before Fukushima's first anniversary. Perhaps this year, the anniversary ceremony will mark both nuclear weapons and nuclear power as human inventions that should be banished....

US & FRANCE UNDAUNTED?

Fukushima's shadow has not deterred the UK and France from signing a deal in mid-February to cooperate on their joint commitment to a nuclear-powered future. In the UK's case, it is facing the decommissioning of all but one of its current fleet of nuclear reactors within the next decade. This represents a loss of around one-fifth of its electricity generating capacity. The pro-nuclear power dismiss a strategy of rapid construction of wind turbines and solar panels and other forms of renewable energy technology as too slow to meet the UK's looming need.

Of course the 'nuclear solution' has problems of its own in this regard..... The first of two EPRs (new Generation III-type power stations) to be built on Hinkley Point in Somerset will be fabulously expensive. Apart from the complicated technology involved, it must include protection against airline impact for its reactor dome and have many other expensive safety features to contain radiation if an accident should occur.

EPRs are under construction at Okiluoto in Finland and at Flamanville in France. Both are years behind schedule and billions over budget. Will Britain be able to construct its two EPRs at Pt Hinkley within budget and on time – by 2018 and 2019 respectively?

Another concern is Britain might become over-reliant on France for its nuclear capacity.

Areva is lobbying the UK government heavily to commit to a new plant (likely to be at Sellafield) to convert its 100 tonne plutonium stockpile into 'mixed oxide' fuel (MOX) which can be burned in its EPR stations. However fourth generation technologies are supposed to enable the disposing of both plutonium and waste stockpiles much more reliably and cheaply. There's some UK-French cooperation on '4th Gen' technology on a prototype sodium-cooled fast reactor called Astra. France envisages deployment of Astra by 2014 at the earliest.

The building of nuclear power capacity to meet UK's energy demands does not look all that speedy. It's still trying to decide which reactor type is most suitable and the pressure is on to choose quickly.

Nuclear power is not the sort of technology you want to rush into. Because it is such a dangerous way to produce electricity, expensive safety measures add immensely to its cost. On the other hand, flying a plane into a forest of wind turbines would not result in endangering all life around it through radioactive contamination. Neither could you make nuclear bombs using solar panels. Renewable energy has a lot going for it – except for political will.