

Nuclear Industry in Australia

Policy Position Statement

Key messages:	The nuclear industry presents unnecessary dangers to human health and the environment. There are potential health risks associated with all aspects of the nuclear industry, and there viable alternatives, including for production of radioisotopes used in nuclear medicine.
Key policy positions:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Australian governments should work towards ending uranium mining, and export. Australian governments should maintain policies of no nuclear power generation.2. A public inquiry should be held into all aspects of radioactive waste management, prior to any decision about long-term management.3. Australia should move to non-reactor based sources of radioisotopes required for nuclear medicine.
Audience:	Federal, State and Territory Governments, policymakers and program managers, PHAA members, media.
Responsibility:	PHAA Ecology and Environment Special Interest Group
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Policy position statement

This position statement should be read in conjunction with PHAA policy position statements on Ecologically Sustainable Human Society, Safe Climate and Nuclear Weapons.

PHAA affirms the following principles:

1. Expansion of the nuclear industry is not in the interests of the health of people in Australia and globally.
2. Nuclear medicine does not require nuclear reactors in Australia.

PHAA notes the following evidence:

3. There are potential health risks associated with every link in the nuclear industry chain including mining and processing of uranium, generation of nuclear power, waste management and weapons development. Evidence for health risks through exposure to ionising radiation is particularly strong for workers in nuclear power generation and fuel reprocessing.¹⁻³
4. There is no known absolute safe level of exposure to ionising radiation to avoid health risks.⁴
5. There are inextricable links along the nuclear chain between the nuclear power industry, waste management, nuclear weapons proliferation and the risk of nuclear war. In an age of increasing globalisation and political tension, nuclear facilities provide a source of nuclear material for the production of weapons.⁵ While it may be possible to regulate nuclear weapons in nation states, there is a risk of terrorist and other non-state actors acquiring nuclear material.⁵
6. As humanity faces increasing environmental degradation and climate change, the threat of nuclear weapons makes the disengagement from the nuclear industry one of the highest priorities for protecting humanity, complex society and the environment.⁶
7. Nuclear power cannot mitigate global warming.⁶
8. The nuclear chain increases radioactive contamination of the environment.⁷
9. There are inherent risks of radioactive spillage and environmental contamination in transporting nuclear waste.⁸
10. The nuclear industry poses an even greater risk of adverse impact to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Australia, as for indigenous people elsewhere. Because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are already the most disadvantaged group in Australia, and less likely to benefit from the nuclear industry, their voices should be actively listened to on nuclear industry issues.⁹
11. Radioisotopes required for nuclear medicine can be produced safely and efficiently without the use of nuclear reactors.¹⁰

12. Implementing this policy would contribute towards the achievement of [UN Sustainable Development Goals 3 – Good Health and Wellbeing](#), [12 – Responsible consumption and production](#), [14 – Life below water](#) and [15 – Life on land](#).

PHAA seeks the following actions:

13. That all Australian State/Territory governments should introduce policies that prohibit further development of uranium mining.
14. The Australian government should not grant or renew any further uranium export licences.
15. The Australian government should maintain a policy of no nuclear power generation.
16. A public inquiry should be held into all aspects of radioactive waste management, prior to any decisions about long-term management.
17. The locating of any radioactive waste management facility should only proceed with full and informed local community and relevant State and Territory consent, including communities through which waste is to be transported.
18. In line with international trends, Australia should move to non-reactor based sourcing of nuclear medicine isotopes.
19. The Australian government should support research and development of alternative isotope production and diagnostic technologies.

PHAA resolves to:

20. Oppose expansion of all aspects of the nuclear industry in Australia, in particular mining and imported waste management.
21. Support communities in their opposition to hosting radioactive waste management facilities, except where there is genuine community support and there is no risk to public health.
22. Collaborate with other organisations with similar aims.

ADOPTED 2023

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References

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