

## Joint Media Release

# Uranium Exports to India

*Church groups in WA today said they were appalled by the Federal Government's about face on uranium sales to India.*

**17 August 2007**



The joint social justice bodies of the Uniting Church in Western Australia, the Anglican Church in Western Australia and the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth, and Partners for Peace have expressed disappointment at the recent decision of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to end Australia's ban on uranium sales to India.

As recently as November 2006, the joint bodies wrote to the Prime Minister expressing concern about the potential policy change of the government on this issue.

In response the Prime Minister's office advised that:

*"India is not a signatory to the Non Proliferation Treaty, and the Australian Government has no current intention to change its policy of selling uranium only to countries that are a party to the NPT and with which Australia has bilateral safeguards agreements,"*

"Therefore, we are particularly concerned that the Prime Minister has announced the Government's intentions to go ahead. We had specifically raised with him the fact that India is not a signatory to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty and had accepted his assurances that this is a barrier to uranium sales to India," said Rosemary Hudson Miller, Uniting Church Social Justice Consultant.

"Our concerns about this issue are heightened by India's history of having already made and tested nuclear weapons. This has added considerably to the tension in the region. Australian uranium sales would enhance the legitimacy of India's nuclear program. It would put us in the impossible position of wanting to critique any expansion of that program while gaining an economic benefit from it.

"The recent experience with North Korea suggests that the manufacturing and testing of nuclear weapons is still a priority for many countries. Every expansion of a nuclear production program is a potential threat to the security of the region.

"Commemorating the victims of nuclear weapons dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at a recent interfaith service, Christians in WA recommitted themselves to the task of ridding the world of the danger posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

"The Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty is an important treaty, and was recently affirmed by the Prime Minister as needing to be valued and supported. To export uranium to non NPT countries will serve to undermine its value and set a negative precedent for other signatories to the NPT. Australia should stand firm on the principles of the treaty.

"Countries not signed up to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty are not committed to the exclusively peaceful use of uranium. The treaty is founded, on the principles of non-proliferation, disarmament and the right to the peaceful use of nuclear technology which ensures countries signed to the NPT will be committed to the responsible use of uranium.

"It is important for Australia to send a consistent and clear message in its exporting of uranium"



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