



WA Nuclear Free Alliance Conference Statement:
“We Can’t Close the Gap by Digging a Deeper Hole”

The Western Australia Nuclear Free Alliance (WANFA), made up of Aboriginal Traditional Land Owners from the Pilbara, the Kimberley, the Goldfields, the Great Victoria Desert, the Central Desert, the Gascoyne, Perth and the South West and their allies, met from 2-4 April 2011 on Noongar lands near Perth.

Since the beginning of time, Aboriginal people have been the proud custodians of our land Australia. Still today, with new technology, new ways and new friends, Aboriginal people continue looking after country. In Western Australia looking after country means preventing uranium mining.

Uranium mining is not like any other mining.

Uranium mining poisons water, land and life through releasing radiation. The mining industry and the government are trying to make people believe uranium mining is inevitable. The industry and the government are trying to make people believe it is safe. Both are trying to make people believe that uranium mining is the way to bring economic benefits. We Say No.

WANFA believes that the costs of uranium mining far outweigh any short term cash payment. We can’t close the gap by increasing the number of radioactive holes in the ground. Aboriginal people should not have to sacrifice the country of future generations, for basic health, education and infrastructure. There are far more jobs and opportunities in a conservation and culture economy, and in caring for country.

We have learnt from the experience of the Mirarr people who have paid the price of the Ranger uranium mine which routinely leaks radioactively contaminated water into Kakadu National Park. We have learnt from the hard lessons learned by the Arabunna, Kokatha and Spinifex people who have survived but continue to be displaced, marginalised and suffer health impacts from the nuclear bomb tests at Maralinga and the Olympic Dam uranium mine in South Australia which divides their community, depletes their water and pollutes their land with radioactive contamination forever.

We acknowledge that the Pilbara and Ashburton people of Western Australia also suffered the effects of the British nuclear weapons tests at Monte Bello Islands.

Like most Australians we are devastated that Australian uranium sold to TEPCO in Japan is likely to be part of the nuclear disaster in Fukushima. WANFA condemns Premier Colin Barnett’s proposal to compensate uranium mining companies for impacts on the industry arising from Fukushima as a vulgar misunderstanding that it is the Japanese people who will continue to suffer for generations, not the industry.

Our job is to stop uranium from our country contaminating people and lands here and overseas. We take this job seriously. We came together to share information, plans and strategies to stop uranium mining companies like BHP, Toro Energy, Mega Lake Maitland, Energy Minerals Australia, Cameco and Mitsubishi that are exploring for uranium on our land, dividing our communities and already contaminating our land, animals and water with drilling for uranium.

We are determined to stop the poison of uranium mining in Western Australia by:

- Sharing information and our stories to educate people about the true risks of radiation;
- Peaceful protest to demand the truth from government;
- Challenging the state and federal government mining approvals processes;
- Challenging the Australian Uranium Association's Indigenous Dialogue Group who are representing the industry rather than a true Aboriginal community view;
- Challenging and exposing anthropologists, archaeologists and pro industry consultants that cover up, excuse the industry or silence us;
- Demanding that our Land Councils, Native Title representative bodies, Native Title service organisations, be accountable, transparent and represent our views as they are legally required to do;

We call for

- **Governments and the nuclear industry to tell the truth about radiation.** There is no safe level of radiation. Some radiation lasts for thousands of years. Stop minimising and trivialising the dangers. Stop pretending optimism is a scientific method.
- **The WA government to commission an open and independent public inquiry into uranium mining.**
- **The Federal Environment Minister, Tony Burke, to block any proposed uranium mining project in Western Australia.**
- **The WA government to immediately act to protect Aboriginal health, including conducting base line health studies in regional areas and publicly release data, to identify the root cause and address the current Aboriginal health problems in Western Australia.**
- **The Western Australian ALP to stand firm on their prudent and popular policy against uranium mining in our state.** With this clear policy declaration, mining companies must understand any investment in uranium is an unnecessary risk as there is no bi-partisan political support for this industry and it is strongly contested by Aboriginal people.
- **Those who finance the uranium industry to avoid the uncertainty and contamination of this trade and instead invest in renewable, clean energy.**

Solidarity Statement from WANFA to the people of Japan

The Western Australia Nuclear Free Alliance (WANFA), made up of Australian Aboriginal Traditional Land Owners and their allies, met from 2-4 April 2011 on Noongah lands near Perth.

The nuclear disaster unfolding in Fukushima Japan was constantly in our thoughts. We wish to express our profound sympathy for the people of Japan at this time.

We express also our profound regret that Australian uranium bought by TEPCO could be what is contaminating your sea, your water, your food chain and your gene pool.

We cannot stop earthquakes and tsunamis. We can – and we must – stop nuclear dangers.

We pledge to redouble our efforts to ensure that uranium from our state of Western Australia never inflicts the terrible damage you are now experiencing.

We are determined to stop Australian uranium being exported. Uranium mining causes environmental and cultural damage in Australia, and can lead to long-term damage overseas.

On a good day Australian uranium becomes radioactive waste. On a bad day it becomes fallout.

We pledge to work together to promote and build safe renewable energy power stations, as we work to close the uranium mines in Australia and help in your efforts to close nuclear power stations in Japan.

Members of our Alliance, including its Chairperson Della Rae Morrison recently travelled to Tokyo, Hiroshima, Osaka and Yokohama making allies, friends and links between our countries.

WANFA wants to strengthen these links through solidarity, joint efforts and future exchanges.

WANFA urges Japan to follow in Germany's footsteps to shut down the nuclear power plants. It's not too late.

Our countries are linked by the ocean, our peoples are linked by a history of surviving the impact of nuclear explosions, and we are linked through a shared hope for a nuclear free future.

Adopted by acclamation 4 April 2011

Stop Australian Uranium Fuelling More Fukushimas

Statement from Australian National Nuclear Free Movement Conference 8 April 2011

As the word 'Fukushima' moves across the headlines and radioactive fallout moves across Japan and pours into the ocean and as the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident approaches, representatives of Australia's nuclear free movement gathered in Melbourne.

As Australians we feel a special responsibility as uranium from our country fuels the nuclear chain worldwide, including the TEPCO and other nuclear facilities in Japan.

Yvonne Margarula, Aboriginal Traditional Owner of the lands on which the Ranger uranium mine sits in Kakadu National Park, summed up this sense of responsibility in her letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon, expressing profound sadness that radiation problems at Fukushima were possibly fuelled by uranium derived from her traditional lands.

We believe that the governments and corporations Australia sells uranium to are in denial about nuclear risks, and consequently lack a preparedness and capacity to deal with those risks.

We feel a profound sympathy for those suffering in Japan from the terrible earthquake, the recovery from which is made so much harder by the resultant and continuing nuclear disaster. We deplore the lack of sensitivity shown by Australian uranium mining executives, including referring to Fukushima as a 'side show' and we condemn and contest those nuclear industry advocates and apologists perversely attempting to exploit the Fukushima disaster to promote the nuclear industry.

Our sympathies particularly go out to the Fukushima workers who have died and been exposed to radiation, the citizens impacted by radioactive fallout on homes, neighbourhoods and towns, the people whose lands and livelihoods have been devastated by radioactive contamination and to the people of Tokyo who fear the water from their taps.

There are people in Australia, many people, who care about your welfare and the long-term health and environmental impacts of the nuclear disaster resulting from the quake. We extend our solidarity and support and pledge to redouble our efforts to prevent more disasters by keeping uranium in the ground.

The serious and continuing nuclear emergency of Fukushima has caused many governments around the world to pause in the light of these extreme events and to reconsider the costs and consequences of their nuclear choices.

The Australian Government should follow the actions of the German, Swiss, Chinese and Venezuelan governments that are pausing to reflect on the merits and risks of nuclear power and consider more sustainable options.

Our Government should pause to conduct a thorough review of its responsibilities and of the risks and consequences of being a major uranium supplier, including our links not only to Fukushima and the many other reactors around the world burning Australian uranium, but to the nuclear weapons industry which continues to hold the world to ransom sixty six years after their first use on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

We have a choice: Instead of fuelling nuclear uncertainties with Australian uranium we must join the global move to energy systems that literally don't cost the Earth. Many countries are contemplating, planning, preparing and implementing a transition from a fossil economy to a renewable future. We must join them.

The future is renewable not radioactive.