

URANIUM MINING, NATIONAL PARTY'S POSITION

**757. Mr M.P. MURRAY to the Premier:**

I refer to the Liberal Party's support for uranium mining in Western Australia. Can the Premier explain the National Party's position on this important community issue?

**Dr G.I. GALLOP replied:**

Yesterday I put forward the proposition in this Parliament that there was a link between uranium exports and the imports of nuclear waste to Western Australia. The opposition said that argument was wrong. I remember the interjections that we copped yesterday. It is interesting that the member for Cottesloe thinks there is a link. He has said on many occasions that if we export the uranium, we have to take responsibility for the waste. We now find that the Leader of the National Party, who unfortunately is not with us today, has also had something to say on this matter. This is the alternative Deputy Premier in Western Australia speaking. The people of Western Australia need to know what the alternative Deputy Premier thinks. I quote -

“If you're worried about nuclear waste being stored, well it's going to be stored in Britain, it's going to be stored in Pakistan . . . India . . . China.

“I'd much rather it was stored in my backyard rather than let some lunatic over there have it stored in his backyard where they don't have the right scientists or the right controls.

“If we sell the uranium to those nuclear power generators we should form a relationship or a business linkage that actually takes back those spent fuel rods once they've used them.”

Let us imagine what would happen if all those spent fuel rods were brought to Western Australia. What chance would our agricultural or tourism industries have? The National Party has taken an extraordinary position on this issue. I remind the house that the world has a massive problem with nuclear waste, despite the fact that the nuclear power industry has not expanded over the past 20 years. Renewable energy and energy efficiency measures are out-competing nuclear energy. Nuclear energy cannot compete in the marketplace. There has been a push to expand the nuclear industry. However, countries all over the world are battling with the massive problem of nuclear waste disposal. It is estimated that the cost of nuclear waste disposal in the United Kingdom is now £56 billion. If the nuclear industry around the world seeks to massively expand, it will look to Australia, and Western Australia, for waste disposal, and the pressure on us will be enormous. To resist that, the governments of this country will need the sort of internal fortitude that Sir Robert Menzies never had when he allowed the British government to blow up the Montebello Islands with its nuclear tests and to then test its nuclear weapons at Maralinga, which had devastating consequences for Aboriginal people.

Several members interjected.

**Dr G.I. GALLOP:** I learn from history, member for Cottesloe. I try to make sure that we pass laws to protect our state and our nation. The National Party has indicated to the people of Western Australia that it does not care about our future. The National Party represents a real risk to the future of Western Australia. I am talking about comments made by the alternative Deputy Premier.

**The SPEAKER:** I call to order the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, the member for Cottesloe, the member for Moore and the member for Warren-Blackwood.