

POLITICAL PARTY SCORECARD

NUCLEAR ISSUES

2010 AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL ELECTION

detailed policies: www.choosenuclearfree.net

LABOR	COALITION	GREENS	URANIUM MINING
✗	✗	✓	Oppose existing uranium mines: Beverley, Roxby Downs (Olympic Dam) and Ranger.
✗	✗	✓	Oppose new uranium mines.
✗	✗	✓	Oppose expansion of existing uranium mines.
✗	✗	✓	Oppose radioactive liquid waste dumping at Beverley and proposed in-situ leach uranium mines.
✓	✗	✓	Oppose uranium mining at Jabiluka.
			URANIUM ENRICHMENT
✓	✗	✓	Oppose uranium enrichment in Australia (the process necessary for making reactor and bomb fuel).
			NUCLEAR REACTORS
✗	✗	✓	Oppose nuclear research reactor at Lucas Heights.
✓	✗	✓	Oppose nuclear power in Australia.
			NUCLEAR WASTE
✗	✗	✓	Oppose proposed Commonwealth nuclear waste dump in NT.
✗	✗	✓	Oppose imposition of nuclear waste transport and dumping.
✗	✗	✓	Oppose the National Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2010 that overrides state and territory prohibitions.
✓	✓	✓	Oppose dumping in Australia of high-level nuclear waste from overseas.
			NUCLEAR WEAPONS
✗	✗	✓	Oppose uranium exports to nuclear weapons states.
✗	✗	✓	Support the immediate start of international negotiations towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention.
✓	✗	✓	Oppose uranium exports to countries that have not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.
✗	✗	✓	Support a nuclear-free defence posture – dissociate Australia from plans and preparations to use nuclear weapons.
✗	✗	✓	Oppose US Missile Defence program and ensure Australian facilities are not used in this program.
			FOOD IRRADIATION
✗	✗	✓	Oppose nuclear irradiation of food.
TOTALS (0 = strongly pro-nuclear 18 = strongly anti-nuclear) COALITION = 1 / 18 LABOR = 5 / 18 GREENS = 18 / 18			

* As at July 2010, the Labor government maintains the ban on sales of uranium from Australia to non-NPT states. However, the Labor government supported the 2008 'US-India' deal in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, which opens up civil nuclear trade with India



NUCLEAR POLICY ANALYSIS 2010:

Government backflips and the opposition-free Opposition

On uranium mining, the major point of difference between the ALP and the Coalition is the ALP's policy of refusing to allow uranium exports to countries which have not ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The ALP continues to oppose the introduction of nuclear power in Australia while the Coalition's policy is that Australia "should not reject the possibility of adding nuclear power to our long-term energy mix" and that a Coalition government would "remove Commonwealth legislative impediments to a nuclear industry and set up a rigorous regulatory framework".

The ALP Government's track record on nuclear issues from 2007-10 reveals a pattern of broken promises and backflips. Examples concerning uranium mining include:

- The government's failure to require an Environmental Impact Assessment to be carried out before approving the Beverley Four Mile uranium mine in SA.
- The government's failure to implement election commitments to strengthen the nuclear safeguards system. Indeed safeguards have been weakened by the government's decision to permit uranium sales to Russia despite revelations that not a single nuclear facility in Russia has been inspected by the International Atomic Energy Agency since 2001.
- The government's failure to in any way advance its policy of "limiting the processing of weapon usable material (separation of plutonium and high enriched uranium in civilian programs)".
- The government promised the establishment of a National Radiation Dose Register for uranium mine workers by the end of 2009, but as at July 2010 the Register is not operational and is being developed within "yet to be agreed timeframes".
- The government's failure to implement ALP policy that uranium mining must be based on "world best practice standards". For example, permitting in-situ leach uranium mining with no requirement to return polluted groundwater to its previous state is one example of this failure.

Examples of backflips and broken promises concerning other aspects of nuclear policy include:

- The government's failure to pursue its policy of "support[ing] exploration of potential legal frameworks for the abolition of nuclear weapons, including negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention that would ban nuclear weapons and provide a global framework for the elimination of existing arsenals." The government has conspicuously failed to promote a Nuclear Weapons Convention in international fora such as the 2010 NPT Review Conference.
- The government appears to have abandoned its previous position that "as a unilateral response to the problem of ballistic missile proliferation, national missile defence is disproportionate, technically questionable, costly and likely to be counter-productive."

There has been a surprising unwillingness by the Coalition Opposition to oppose the government on nuclear issues no matter how blatant the contradiction between the government's actions and its formal policies and promises. The Opposition's silence in relation to many of the above-mentioned government backflips and broken promises illustrates the point. Another important example is the government's National Radioactive Waste Management Bill 2010, which overrides the Aboriginal Heritage Act, the Aboriginal Land Rights Act and all state/territory legislation, and upholds the strongly contested nomination of a potential dump site at Muckaty in the NT. (The nomination is the subject of a legal challenge by Traditional Owners in the Federal Court.)

More information:

- Vote Nuclear Free www.votenuclearfree.net
- Friends of the Earth www.foe.org.au/anti-nuclear
- Medical Association for Prevention of War www.mapw.org.au
- International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons www.icanw.org
- EnergyScience Coalition www.energyscience.org.au
- Australian Nuclear Free Alliance www.anfa.org.au
- Beyond Nuclear Initiative www.beyondnuclearinitiative.wordpress.com
- Australian Conservation Foundation www.acfonline.org.au/nuclear
- Australian Student Environment Network <http://asen.org.au/campaigns/no-nukes>