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Media Release

Uranium mining in Queensland – CCC says ‘no way!’

Capricorn Conservation Council has come out strongly in support of the state government’s policy of ‘no uranium mining in Queensland’. CCC Coordinator, Janet Barrett, this week said, ‘There are worrying signs that indicate that pressure is mounting on the Bligh government to change its mind and give the green light to uranium mining.’

While the prospect is no doubt economically enticing to a cash-strapped government in deficit, Ms Barrett believes the threat of nuclear proliferation, terrorist actions, and the environmental degradation that comes with mining uranium far outweigh any economic benefits.

‘Although uranium produces nuclear energy that is clean and relatively energy efficient, the environmental impacts of mining it are devastating. Air and water pollution are major concerns,’ said Ms Barrett. ‘Aside from the fact that uranium mining has a voracious appetite for water (a commodity in increasingly short supply), there are risks associated with radioactive decay from waste, tailings dams, the disposal of contaminated water, and run-off from retention ponds and mine stockpiles.’ Ms Barrett cites the seepage of contaminated water that leached into groundwater reservoirs at both Ranger and Olympic Dam mines – a well kept secret for many years.

CCC is also concerned about the environmental impacts at the end of a uranium mine’s life. Decommissioning and site rehabilitation are enormously expensive and highly dangerous with considerations being ecosystem viability, landform stability, and radiological safety.

In the past, indigenous peoples have felt pressure from mining companies to accept uranium mines on their lands. No greater example exists than the ill-fated Jabiluka Mine located inside world heritage-listed Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory.

CCC is ready to campaign actively and strongly against any government decision to allow uranium mining in Queensland. They urge all members of the public who do not want uranium mining, to contact their state and federal politicians and make their feelings known.

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