

# Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)



National Office: PO Box 1379, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia  
Level 2, 161 Barry St, Carlton, Victoria 3053, Australia  
p: +61 (0)3 8344 1637 f: +61 (0)3 8344 1638  
e: mapw@mapw.org.au w: www.mapw.org.au  
ABN: 15 779 883 661

6 November 2009

Hon Kevin Rudd MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

## **Re: Australia, nuclear power and a healthy future for all**

I write on behalf of the Medical Association for Prevention of War. We are an organisation of doctors and other health professionals working to prevent war, in particular nuclear war, by addressing its causes and consequences.

We applaud your recently expressed commitment to continue to reject nuclear power as an energy source in Australia.

We believe that every nuclear reactor increases the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, which if used would have catastrophic effects on the future of humanity and of our planet. As the ongoing crisis involving Iran's enrichment program illustrates, the material and capacity to produce nuclear power intrinsically involves the capacity to produce fissile material usable for nuclear weapons. Every step along the civil nuclear road demands tighter security because it is a step up in proliferation risk.

A major benefit from eschewing nuclear electricity-generation technologies in favour of enhanced efficiencies and the propagation of genuinely renewable energy resources will be the easier identification and prosecution of proliferators. Bomb ingredients will be harder to acquire, more conspicuous to seek, and politically costlier to procure. This will substantially deter proliferation, whilst facilitating timely detection and intervention, focusing scarce intelligence resources on needles, not haystacks.

A climate-stressed world is no place for nuclear weapons. Misguided efforts to promote nuclear power as a climate change mitigator will potentially result in more nuclear-armed nations and a greater threat of devastating radioactive warfare. In our struggle to reduce the production of greenhouse gases, it would be an ecocidal miscalculation to fuel the greatest of all global incendiaries.

As an organisation of health professionals we have further grave concerns about the deleterious health impacts of the nuclear power industry. In particular, we refer to the uniquely hazardous nature of nuclear waste and the ongoing failure of the industry to establish satisfactory long-term management systems.

Recent research has underscored the hazardous nature of ionising radiation, even at relatively low levels: the 15 country nuclear industry worker study - the largest to date of nuclear industry workers - demonstrates an excess radiation-related cancer risk, at levels which are *within* current recommended occupational limits. This is 2-3 times that projected on the basis of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki health data and further emphasises that nuclear power is a false pathway to energy security.

Other recent studies, including a meticulous analysis sponsored by the German Government, has revealed unequivocal evidence for an increased risk of childhood leukaemia for people living near normally operating nuclear power plants.

This scientific data lends strong support to your own government's rejection of domestic nuclear power.



Global energy security can and must be achieved without nuclear power. It is imperative that Australia take a leading role in developing and implementing sustainable and renewable energy technologies. Efficiency technologies, wind turbines, photo-voltaics, solar and geo-thermal plants, bioenergy facilities and wave and tidal stations do not require enormous investment in intensive security apparatus or toxic waste disposal facilities.

They *can* provide Australia - and the world - with a secure, sustainable and healthy energy-future.

We urge the government to do everything possible to ensure positive action at the Copenhagen Climate Conference in December, including the promotion of renewable energies and a shift away from nuclear power with its multiple problems.

We would be especially grateful if you could clarify the position the government negotiators are being directed to take in Copenhagen on the inclusion of nuclear power into the post-2012 Clean Development Mechanism, and with whom the government is consulting on this matter?

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bill Williams', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr Bill Williams  
**President, Medical Association for Prevention of War (Australia)**

**CC:**  
The Hon. Malcolm Turnbull, MP; Leader of the Opposition,