



## INSIDE

Nuclear risks: 2

Arms control: 3

ICAN update: 4

Left: Passing members of the public transformed bombs into works of art on Nuclear Abolition Day, 25 June, on Melbourne's Princes Bridge. The event was organised by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. More on page 3.

Centre: 'Think Outside the Bomb' is our ICAN youth conference in Melbourne, in September: details page 4.

## US modernises nuclear arsenal

MAPW co-hosted visiting US nuclear weapons expert Hans Kristensen, from the Federation of American Scientists, during his recent visit to Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

The visit was timed to coincide with the 66th anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Hans is a distinguished scholar in the field of US nuclear weapons strategy and capacity. He explained that although the Obama administration has

put nuclear non-proliferation on the agenda for the first time, this must be seen as part of a "schizophrenic" policy which also includes a commitment to spend \$213 billion on nuclear weapons modernisation, and the building of three new factories making parts for nuclear weapons.

Hans spoke to a wide variety of groups in Sydney and Melbourne. He also met with ANU Chancellor Prof Gareth Evans, and former PM Malcolm Fraser.

Hans spoke at a well-attended Nagasaki Day meeting in Melbourne, a joint initiative between ICAN, MAPW, Japanese for Peace, and the International Red Cross – who have importantly taken up nuclear weapons as a major campaign, as part of their work supporting international humanitarian law.

- **Stay in touch with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) at [www.icanw.org.au](http://www.icanw.org.au)**

# Fukushima: lessons on nuclear risks

## FUKUSHIMA TODAY

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has given the Fukushima disaster a 7/7 rating on the nuclear accident scale, the same as the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Some estimates suggest radiation releases will continue for more than a year and it will take decades to decommission the plant, if at all possible. Like the Chernobyl site, the Fukushima plant may remain a no-man's land for thousands of years if the fuel rods are unable to be removed, and hundreds of years if they are.

TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) and the Japanese authorities have come under considerable criticism for acting too slowly and inadequately, and failing to provide full and timely information to the public. The IAEA too has been criticised for not taking on a greater role sooner. The Japanese authorities set up a 20km exclusion zone, rather than the 80km advised by the IAEA, and despite monitoring showing high levels of contamination beyond the exclusion zone potentially jeopardising public health.

## EARTHQUAKES

It seems inconceivable that a nuclear plant should be placed in a seismically active zone. Yet approximately 90 of the world's nuclear power reactors are in moderately active seismic zones, and 34 in high risk areas. All of Japan's and Taiwan's reactors are in earthquake zones.

A 1990 report by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission identified earthquake-induced diesel generator failure and power outage leading to failure of cooling systems as one of the "most likely causes" of nuclear accidents from an external event.

Japan lies on the convergent zone of four major tectonic plates. In the last 100 years there have been five major subduction zone earthquakes which have battered the region where Fukushima is located – on the highly unstable Pacific 'ring of fire.'

## TSUNAMIS

It would have been better if the Japanese had resorted to tsunami records. Japan has suffered 195 tsunamis since 400. The Fukushima plant was only designed to withstand a 5.7m tsunami.

*"Men and women around the world are asking: are we really doing well and all that we can to safeguard the world's people in the case of nuclear accidents? Recent events suggest that there are large gaps in how societies and the international system think and act about breaches to nuclear safety." - UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 10 May 2011.*

## JAPAN'S POOR RECORD

TEPCO and indeed, the whole Japanese nuclear industry has revealed a long history of poor safety, falsified maintenance and safety records, as well as fraudulently concealed accidents over many decades. In 2002, Tokyo Electric admitted it had falsified repair reports at nuclear plants for more than two decades. Chairman Hiroshi Araki and President Nobuyama Minami resigned to take responsibility for hundred of occasions on which the company had submitted false data to the regulator, accompanied by a cadre of senior managers. All were promptly re-employed as consultants and advisers to the company, and remain to this day. Then in 2007, the utility said it hadn't come entirely clean five years earlier. It had concealed at least six emergency stoppages at its Fukushima Dai-Ichi power station and a "critical" reaction at the plant's No. 3 unit that lasted for seven hours.

There have been almost a dozen deaths at Japanese nuclear plants in the past two decades due to accidents. Freshly revealed reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), dating from the 1990s, describe safety precautions at Japanese nuclear reactors as dangerously weak. IAEA inspectors visited four reactors in 1992 and 1995, finding 90 deficiencies in safety procedures. The revelation follows the confession by four companies – TEPCO, Chubu Electric Power, Japan Atomic Power and Tohoku Electric Power – that they concealed flaws in their reactors from government regulators.

## NUCLEAR REACTOR TYPES

In October 2010, Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES) released a simulation in which a nuclear reactor similar to those at Fukushima would have a

core meltdown and other consequences only 100 minutes after losing its cooling capabilities, leaving very little margin for error in the backup systems.

US Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) documents from 1972 reveal concerns about the vulnerability of the Fukushima-type boiled water reactor's less robust containment capability that would make it vulnerable to a hydrogen explosion

## COOLING SYSTEMS

The nuclear industry has now developed "passive" cooling systems that rely on gravity rather than powered pumps to initiate cooling in the case of an emergency. However it is misleading to imply that, in lacking passive cooling, Fukushima was somehow unique. Of 65 nuclear reactors currently in preparation or in actual construction, only four deploy such systems, as they dramatically increase the cost of a nuclear power plant, and nuclear power is already uneconomic.

## SAFETY CULTURE

A strong safety culture in the nuclear industry requires a strong, fearless and independent regulator immune from political pressure and conflicting political agendas to avoid being compromised by industry co-option or political lobbying.

Strong safety cultures require ongoing vigilance and effort. Transparency and accountability are essential.

The cosy conflicted and intertwined relationships between regulators, government and the nuclear power utilities in Japan placed nuclear power advocacy ahead of safety. Almost every country proposing to expand or introduce nuclear power ranks below Japan (27th) on the Transparency International (TI) corruption index.

*Dr Peter Karamoskos is a nuclear radiologist, represents the public on the Radiation Health Committee of Australia's nuclear regulatory agency ARPANSA, and is MAPW's Treasurer. Contact MAPW for a fully referenced paper on this topic.*

**The broader implications of Fukushima will be discussed at our National Council meeting on 3 September – see page 4.**

## Peace briefs

### MAPW CALLS FOR SRI LANKA INVESTIGATION

Since the 4 July ABC *Four Corners* program which documented human rights abuses during the Sri Lankan conflict, MAPW has issued a media release and written to Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd, urging an independent international investigation. Allegations of war crimes committed by both sides during the war, and on a very large scale by Sri Lankan government forces, have been made since the time of the war. *Four Corners* showed distressing and compelling footage that strongly supports the allegations. Read our statements at [www.mapw.org.au](http://www.mapw.org.au)

### MAPW PRESIDENT SIGNS LETTER ON CLUSTER BOMB LAWS

Dr Bill Williams, on behalf of MAPW, is one of 45 signatories of an open letter to the Defence Minister, Foreign Minister and Attorney General urging changes to the proposed legislation on the ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions expected to be debated by the Senate in its next session (see [www.mapw.org.au](http://www.mapw.org.au) for the letter). The legislation would have seriously weakened this important international treaty but luckily the last session of Parliament ran out of time before dealing with this item, so it is still possible to get the legislation modified. You could speak to your local members, write letters to the newspaper, and sign the petition at [www.cmcaustralia.org](http://www.cmcaustralia.org)

The transformation of a nuclear weapon into a peaceful work of art: organised by ICAN on Nuclear Abolition Day, 25 June. Go to [www.icanw.org.au](http://www.icanw.org.au) to see more photos. Contact ICAN or MAPW for hints on how to organise a similar event: people joined in enthusiastically.



## Controlling the arms trade

Ten activists from our global organisation IPPNW brought an important health perspective to the recent Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) 3rd PrepCom meetings at the UN in New York.

The treaty is being sought to control conventional arms transfers that may be used in crime, terrorism, human rights abuses, genocide and violations of international humanitarian law – thus undermining peace, security and sustainable development worldwide.

MAPW member Gurshant Singh attended the conference and will report back it at our National Council meeting. Other IPPNW affiliates represented included Zambia, Nigeria and the USA.

IPPNW's goals were to bring the message that the public health community has an important role to play in both implementing and monitoring a robust ATT, and to advocate for a humanitarian-based treaty. Other prominent voices ranged from arms industry representatives, to an international group of survivors of gun violence – who joined IPPNW members and over 100 NGO colleagues from the Control Arms Coalition in calling for a global treaty.

IPPNW serves on the Steering Board of the Coalition. You can read a more detailed report at <http://ipnw.org/> To get involved on this and other conventional arms issues, contact Maria Valenti, [mvalenti@ipnw.org](mailto:mvalenti@ipnw.org).

### MAPW HOSTS YELLOW-CAKE TEA

Over 60 medical students joined MAPW's e-list after visiting our stall at the medical students' annual Global Health Conference (GHC) at the University of NSW.

Dr Sue Wareham spoke eloquently on war and health as the closing plenary speaker. Queensland student member Misha Byrne organised a 'yellow-cake' morning tea, and a display stall, (pictured at left); supported by NSW Coordinator Dr Anne Noonan and EO Nancy Atkin.

We are now a regular sponsor of the GHC, which has become one of the most important events on our annual calendar. We are waiting for the 2012 venue to be set by the Australian Medical Students Association.

### HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI DAYS

Around Australia MAPW members have marked the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

International nuclear weapons expert Hans Kristensen from the Federation of American scientists visited Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne, hosted by MAPW and ICAN with our partner organisations. Also visiting are André Larivière and François Mativet from the major French network Réseau Sortir du Nucléaire; on their way to WA's 'Walk away from Uranium'.

Dr Sue Wareham was invited as guest speaker at the Brisbane Hiroshima Day rally; whilst ICAN's Tilman Ruff and Tim Wright were invited to Japan. Vigils were held around Australia, including Melbourne and Hobart.



The now-traditional GHC yellow-cakes

## ICAN Australia activity



The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), launched by MAPW in 2007, has several new initiatives in Australia – and has also this year opened an international office in Geneva.

**Thinking outside the bomb:** Are you aged 18 – 30 and concerned about the threat caused by the world's nuclear weapons? Or just interested in learning more?

From 2–4 September, ICAN are holding a weekend conference which will include workshops, forums, presentations, social events and street actions. Participants will have the chance to meet leading disarmament experts and devise ways to transform the vision of nuclear abolition into reality.

The meeting will be at the Evatt Room, Trades Hall, 54 Victoria St., Carlton. There is a \$30.00 registration fee, not including accommodation, travel or food. Please register now at [www.icanw.org.au/register](http://www.icanw.org.au/register)

**The Future Fund's nuclear weapons investments:** ICAN director Tim Wright has discovered through Freedom of Information that \$135 million of taxpayers' money has been invested in 15 companies involved in the design, production and maintenance of nuclear weapons for the US, Britain, France and India. You can write to the Fund to ask that they disinvest – or send an ICAN postcard: contact us if you need more!

**Australians for a Nuclear Weapons Convention** is an ICAN initiative aimed at galvanising high-level support in Australia for a global ban on nuclear weapons. Recipients of the Order of Australia or similar honours, are invited to sign the short statement above endorsing UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's call for negotiations on a treaty to outlaw and eliminate all nuclear weapons. Three former prime ministers and former military heads have joined 688 Australians: doctors, artists, musicians and scientists — and of course many MAPW members. To sign, and view signatories, go to [www.nuclearweaponsconvention.org.au/](http://www.nuclearweaponsconvention.org.au/)

## Diary dates

◀ **Weekend of 27–28 August**

**PIANO CONCERTS FOR MAPW**  
More fabulous fund-raising concerts with talented MAPW member Dr Robert Schmidli, in Melbourne (Saturday evening) and Romsey (Sunday afternoon)

◀ **Weekend of 2–4 September**

**MAPW NATIONAL COUNCIL**  
All members welcome! Details below

◀ **Wednesday 21 September**

**INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE**  
Commemorations include SA Branch schools event

◀ **Saturday 24 September**

**ART FOR PEACE EXHIBITION**  
Opens at Moore's Gallery, Fremantle; followed next day by symposium: Uranium and the Poetry of Peace

◀ **Around Australia**

**MAPW MONTHLY MEETINGS**  
Include Melbourne second Tuesday evening; Hobart first Monday lunchtime; Alice Springs, first Saturday.

**DETAILS AND MUCH MORE:**

[www.mapw.org.au](http://www.mapw.org.au)

**THANKS** to all our members who have joined or re-joined for the new financial year. More subscriptions and donations will allow us to expand our work: please recommend MAPW to your colleagues. Forms and details available at [www.mapw.org.au](http://www.mapw.org.au) or call 03 9023 1958.

## MAPW National Council 2011

Our annual Council meeting is 2 – 4 September in Melbourne. All members are welcome to attend what is always an informative, productive – and enjoyable - weekend of planning, networking and information-sharing. Agenda includes:

**Friday evening from 6pm:** Welcome, light meal, and screening of the film "*Beating the Bomb*", a highly-recommended documentary on the history of the anti-nuclear movement. (A joint session with ICAN Youth Conference.)

**Saturday morning from 9am:** Formal start of the meeting. Biennial elections for executive positions; reports on activities and membership; consideration of 2010-2011 budget

**Saturday afternoon from 2pm:** Forum: Nuclear issues – from Fukushima to nuclear weapons. Assoc. Prof Tilman Ruff and Prof Richard Tanter will discuss the Fukushima disaster in the context of the global nuclear industry.

**Saturday evening dinner, 6.30pm for 7.00pm:** Historian Prof Marilyn Lake, co-author of *The Anzac Myth*, will speak on "Memorialising War, When is Enough?" La Notta restaurant, 140 Lygon Street Carlton. RSVP: [vic@mapw.org.au](mailto:vic@mapw.org.au) or 03 9023 1958.

Other sessions (including 9.00am-1.30pm Sunday) will include strategic planning, and practical workshops ranging from letter-writing to database use. We will hear from member Gurshant Singh on the UN Arms Trade Treaty meeting he attended in July.

Note that formal decisions are taken by Council members. Council is made up of eight Branch Coordinators, and executive members who are elected biennially by the Council: President, Treasurer, Vice-Presidents and Secretary.

**Please let us know** which sessions you plan to attend. Venue is Meeting Room One, Trades Hall, 54 Victoria St., Carlton.