



Medical Association for Prevention of War

Media Release

Doctors raise concerns about sloppy radiation science

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The Medical Association for Prevention of War (MAPW) – the Australian branch of a Nobel Peace Prize winning public health organisation – has called for increased transparency and robust science in medical presentations on radiation health issues.

The call follows concerns raised earlier this year when junior uranium company Toro Energy promoted the fringe scientific view that exposure to low-level radiation is harmless. Toro Energy has sponsored speaking visits to Australia by Canadian scientist Dr Doug Boreham, who argues that low-level radiation is actually beneficial to human health. Attached is a letter signed by 45 doctors deploring the use of junk science to lower occupational health and safety standards.

Toro Energy's most advanced project is the proposed Wiluna uranium mine in the WA Goldfields, currently being assessed by the federal government.

MAPW notes that Dr Boreham is now in Adelaide speaking on radiation health issues at the national conference of the Australian Institute of Occupational Hygienists. MAPW is concerned that this might again mean the promotion of fringe views that are clearly inconsistent with long-standing, expert and mainstream scientific evidence and assessment

Recent scientific research has heightened concern about exposure to radon, the main source of radiation doses to uranium industry workers. In 2009, the International Commission on Radiological Protection concluded that radon gas delivers almost twice the radiation dose to humans as originally thought, and the Commission is in the process of reassessing permissible levels. Previous dose estimates to miners need to be approximately doubled to accurately reflect the lung cancer hazard.

MAPW calls on uranium companies, industry associations and professional bodies to stop promoting fringe scientific views such as those promoted by Dr Boreham.

When making statements and presentations in an area as important and complex as radiation health and safety issues, all parties have an obligation to ensure that these adequately and accurately reflect both the science and contemporary international health and safety standards.

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