

STOPPING THE NUKE OPTION AT THE SOURCE

As countries around the world push for the expansion of nuclear power, Australia with over 30% of the world's uranium reserves is being seen as a reliable source of uranium to fuel this dirty, dangerous and expensive industry. This has caused an unprecedented rush by mining companies trying to fast track their way into Australia, particularly Western Australia.

Footprints for Peace, a global grassroots group which organises walks, runs and bike rides throughout the world has this year joined with local Perth and national groups in Australia to pressure the government and mining companies to stop and prevent mining uranium oxide.

Footprints for Peace, is calling on activists and organizations from Australia and around the world to join with them in Wiluna, Western Australia this August for a 10 week walk to Perth to tell the public, the government and industries to **walk away from uranium mining** as it is an expensive toxic industry which produces radioactive waste and weapons usable material.



Marcus Atkinson, nuclear free future coordinator for Footprints for Peace, said their needs to be a deeper understanding of the real impacts this industry is having globally.

"The human rights abuses, the intense water usage and the radioactive contamination that this is causing to society are outrageous. There are so many clean alternative energy sources out there. It is time for the nuclear industry to say its farewells," Atkinson said.

Kerrie-Ann Garlick, community organiser for Footprints for Peace continued stating, "the mining companies often harass and divide indigenous communities so they can continue to destroy the environment for this toxic and dangerous radioactive substance to transport and sell throughout the world.

The walk from Wiluna to Perth is an opportunity for people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures to come together to walk the land, live in a community sharing collective and to educate ourselves and the public on the nuclear industry, Garlick said.

Over the 10-week period that will begin on the 22nd August, the walk will stop in communities along the scheduled route and talk with the local people about the nuclear industry and their experiences. We are hoping to outreach to a range of community groups and people such as traditional owners, schools, churches, hospitals, health centres, students, artists, workers, farmers in an attempt to create dialogue about the nuclear industry.

HISTORY OF FOOTPRINTS FOR PEACE

Footprints for Peace have been on a remarkable journey over the last 7 years that began in 2003 when the group began walking from the Olympic Dam uranium mine at Roxby Downs, South Australia. This was the beginning of a 9-month walk that finished in Hiroshima on August 6th 2004. Indigenous and non-indigenous people from Australia, Japan, the U.S.A and Europe joined the walk to strengthen the global movement for a nuclear free future.

In 2005 Footprints for Peace Australia joined with the U.S.A Footprints for Peace group to combine their energy, resources and dedication to create a global grassroots action awareness group that has successfully organised walks, runs and bike rides around the world.

Footprints for Peace, in both 2005 and 2010 organised an 80-day walk from the Y-12 nuclear weapons facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee to the United Nations in New York to participate in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that is held every 5 years.

Between 2005 & 2010 Footprints for Peace organised a series of nuclear free future walks in Canada, Ireland, Scotland, France, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium and the USA.



Each walk has followed the route of the nuclear chain, from uranium mines to enrichment facilities, nuclear power plants, reprocessing facilities, waste dumpsites and nuclear weapons facilities. The walks have led to communities that have been affected by this industry to build solidarity with these local communities who will carry the burden of this dirty industry for generations. Local stories and witness to the sickness, the accidents and the broken promises have awakened many people to the deadly process and trail of destruction left by the nuclear industry. The message we carry that continues to strengthen as we walk is: All Life is Sacred, Protect Mother Earth.

After an amazing 7 years of walking to nuclear facilities through out the world it is time to bring it back to Australia where the start of this deadly chain begins with uranium mining.

We believe that if we are to truly create a nuclear free future then we must put all our efforts into stopping the expansion and development of new and existing uranium mines. We support the push by many organisations around the world calling for a global moratorium on uranium mining.

On World Peace Day, September 21st last year, Footprints for Peace launched a new series of walks "Campaign for a Nuclear Free Future" that will see the organisation walk over 5 years to raise awareness of the dangerous and deadly effects of the nuclear industry, promote renewable energy and build stronger international alliance.

The Campaign for a Nuclear Free Future is a grassroots awareness raising and action based campaign that will begin with highlighting the deadly and dangerous effects of uranium mining and start at the first proposed uranium mine site in Western Australia, Yeelirrie and walk to Perth. We will build on this walk and take the messages to Canada and the USA and follow the deadly nuclear fuel path from uranium mines to nuclear reactors, waste dumps and nuclear weapons sites. We will end the walk in Japan on the 70th anniversary of Hiroshima.

The Walk for a Nuclear Free Future calls for:

- respect and solidarity for Indigenous Peoples Rights
- a global ban on uranium mining
- phase out of nuclear power
- complete nuclear weapons disarmament
- responsible and scientific solutions to nuclear waste
- full rehabilitation of abandoned uranium mines and all nuclear facilities
- development and use of renewable energy technology

Each Footprints for Peace event is open to all people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures and we invite people to come together and walk the land in respect of indigenous people and live in community sharing responsibilities. The walks will bring people together from all over the world to walk (or bike ride if you prefer) from community to community to build and strengthen the global movement for a nuclear free future.

We hope that our walks will inspire, empower and mobilise people to take action not only through walking but also through creative campaigning in street theatre, music, art, public meetings, petitioning, letter writing and non-violent direct actions as we continue to keep the spirit of grass roots resistance alive.

URANIUM MINING IN WA – an environmental and social disaster

Since the 2008 State election and the lift on statewide ban on uranium mining, the Western Australian Liberal Government has spent close to \$1 million on grants for uranium exploration in WA, including in some of WA's most pristine and valuable environments.

The State Government has also commissioned an industry-based panel to benchmark WA's regulations with 'World's Best Practice' an ambiguous term. The first half of the project will cost taxpayers \$400,000, the second part of the project has no fixed price. The panel was awarded to the Australian Centre for Geomechanics (ACG) who are made up of corporate sponsors including Australia's two biggest uranium producers- BHP and Rio Tinto. Every corporate sponsor of ACG, except one, has at one time profited from the nuclear industry.

There are currently 140 companies that operate in WA that have interests in uranium. With uranium exploration licenses splattering the country there are no checks on how these companies are engaging with communities and what information is being provided; about radiation and health, about water requirements for mining; about the legacy of radioactive tailings or about the end products of the nuclear chain- depleted uranium weapons, nuclear weapons and radioactive waste. There must be some regulation of the way companies engage with communities. The potential to gloss over the true dangers of uranium mining is simply too easy.

At many of the sites with proposed uranium mines, the water table is very close to the surface and above the uranium deposit. With proposed open pit mining and proposed in pit tailings disposal there is growing concern that radio nuclides will contaminate ground water and seep into the environment.



Montague Ranges, Yeelirrie WA

Below are the details of the projects that have entered in to the State and Federal approvals process for a mining lease.

Yeelirrie: Uranium Project - BHP Billiton. Wongutha Country

Site: 85km South West of Wiluna in the Montague ranges. Approximately 105,000 tonnes of uranium. Mining method: One long strip mine, mined in sections. Yeelirrie in the local language means place of death. The Wongutha people are totally opposed to the mine and have directed the representative group, the Central Desert Native Title service to no longer talk to BHP Billiton. The local station owners are also opposed to the mine.

Kintyre: Uranium Project - Cameco/ Mitsubishi. Martu Country

Site: On the Western edge of the Great Sandy desert in the Karlamilyi National Park (Rudall River National Park). Approximately 36,000 tonnes of uranium. Mining method proposed: several open pits. The Karlamily National Park encompasses an entire arid zone river system, salt lakes, sand dunes and permanent water holes that support an array of frogs, birds, mammals and reptiles. The Martu people opposed a uranium mine at the site in the 1980's and continue to oppose the mine.

Lake Way / Centipede aka Wiluna: Uranium Project - Toro Energy Ltd.

Site: 17-35 km South East of Wiluna. Approximately 11,000 tonnes of uranium. Mining method proposed: several shallow pits. This area is arid desert with natural salt lakes. This area is still pastoral land with cattle on the site. Local Martu people continue to hunt in the area. Many of the custodians of this area are unsure about the

project and have many questions that remain unanswered by the Toro and the Government. Elders in the community are adamant they do not want uranium mining.

Lake Maitland: Uranium Project - Mega Lake Maitland Pty Ltd.

Site: 85 km South East of Wiluna. Approximately 12,000 tonnes of uranium.

Mining method proposed: Several shallow pits. This area is arid desert with natural salt lakes. This area has been pastoral land since occupation and is still used for hunting by the local Martu people. Many of the custodians of this area are unsure about the project and have many questions that remain unanswered by the Mega and the Government. Elders in the community are adamant they do not want uranium mining.

For more info on the exploration uranium mines in WA please see:

www.ccwa.org.au/content/uranium-mines

Footprints for Peace recognises and supports indigenous peoples rights and we are therefore committed on the walk for a nuclear free future from Wiluna to Perth to respect and be in solidarity with the traditional owners of this land. To date, we have permission to walk on their land from Wiluna to Kalgoorlie, and are currently working on receiving permission to walk from Kalgoorlie to Perth.

“BHP are mining this death, spreading the poison and making a bomb to kill other people. The spirit inside me will break if uranium is mined at Yeelirrie as it’s a place of death and it will spread to others”
Richard Evans, Koara (Gwa-da) Tribal Leader from Leonora.

For more information on any of these events please contact:

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SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

Anti-Nuclear Alliance of WA (ANAWA)

WA Nuclear Free Alliance (WANFA)

Ban Uranium Mining Permanently Collective (BUMP)

Conservation Council of WA

Fremantle Anti Nuclear Group (FANG)

Greens WA

Unions WA

Indigenous Women’s Initiatives, USA (IWI)

Alternative Clean Energy Collective (ACE), Friends of the Earth

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN)

Missourians for Safe Energy, USA

Nuclear Information and Resource Service, USA

Nuclear Resister, USA

Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance, USA

People for Nuclear Disarmament

Reseau Sortir du Nucleaire France

Seeds of Solidarity, USA

Women Against Nuclear Power, Finland

Women for Peace, Finland

To become a supporting organization visit:

<http://footprints.footprintsforpeace.net/nffcampaign/NFFSupportinggroups.htm>