

aluminium has led to the destruction of the traditional home of the Aboriginal community at Weipa in Queensland.

Bauxite mining in the forests near Perth threatens to permanently pollute the city's water supply. Destruction of Western Australia's small forest area is causing surface water supplies to become more salty. This could be disastrous in a state that is already largely desert.

Like all industrial developments, mining projects need to be considered for their social value, not undertaken just because the stuff is there and can be dug up at a profit.

Rainforest

Environmental issues affect the future well-being of all Australians. We inhabit the driest continent in a world becoming increasingly dry largely because of ongoing destruction of the forests.

Resulting climatic changes are causing the steady growth of the world's deserts. Humanity must conserve what forests and other natural resources are left if we are to have a world worth living in.

Instead of permitting destruction of the last surviving stands of original forest, the government should embark on a reforestation program.

Roadworks in the Daintree rainforest should be halted immediately. All other surviving forests should be protected. There should be a program of replanting to meet timber needs and dramatically increase the total forest area.

Communities currently based on felling the original forest must be guaranteed alternate employment.

Technology today has reached the point where much that has taken millions of years to develop could be wiped out in just one or two generations.

The answer is not less technology, but more rational use of it. The fact that a project may be profitable doesn't mean that it is in the long term interests of the whole society.

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vote Socialist Workers Party

Policy statement on the environ- ment

Stop uranium mining

Uranium is a deadly substance whose use in nuclear reactors produces radioactive wastes that science has found no safe way of storing or disposing of.

On top of that, nuclear reactors, even when used for peaceful purposes produce plutonium — an essential component of nuclear warheads. Consequently there can be no guarantee that uranium from any source will be used only for peaceful purposes.

One third of the Western world's uranium deposits are in Australia. Even though the market price has halved in recent years, mining companies still stand to make more than \$100 billion in profits from digging up this death-dealing substance.

Everyone connected with mining and using uranium risks their health. Miners are exposed to cancer-causing low-level radiation.

Nuclear reactors are particularly dangerous. A reactor accident near a major city could kill hundreds of thousands, even millions of people. Such an accident came within minutes of happening five years ago at Three Mile Island in the United States.

Reactor wastes which remain deadly for hundreds of thousands of years have been building up in "temporary storage" for 45 years. Some countries have dumped such wastes at sea, risking nuclear contamination of fish and other marine life, which are an important food source.

The much publicised Australian-developed Synroc storage system is a fraud. No pilot study has been carried out or is even under way to test the material's capability of safely storing radioactive wastes.

Big business

But with so much money at stake the small, powerful minority which runs the mining companies is determined to dig up uranium regardless of the dangers. Their wealth enables them to buy off politicians and run expensive advertising campaigns.

The Socialist Workers Party supports an immediate end to all uranium mining and repudiation of all uranium contracts.

Miners and other workers disadvantaged by this should be paid relocation and retraining expenses and guaranteed alternative work by the

federal government.

Overseas interests that signed contracts for Australian uranium did so at their own risk, knowing that there is massive opposition to uranium mining.

There is no way of guaranteeing that Australian uranium will not be used in nuclear weapons. "Safeguards" preventing this can be cancelled by any country on six months' notice.

Dead end

It is simply untrue to claim that uranium is the fuel of the future for an energy starved world. The United States nuclear industry, despite huge government subsidies, is in deep financial trouble.

Modern, efficient coal power stations produce electricity more cheaply than nuclear plants. Despite attempts of vested interests to discredit solar energy, it is important that research continue into means of tapping this inexhaustible energy source.

It is true that the world's energy reserves are limited, but gambling the future on nuclear energy is no answer. Current coal and oil supplies are sufficient to last the world 100 years or more at currently increasing levels of use.

The extension of existing supplies through

the greater use of renewable energy sources requires a level of forward planning of which the present system is incapable.

Major energy companies should be nationalised so that energy development can be rationally planned, and so that real energy reserves can be known.

Supporters of uranium mining have claimed that it is safer than mining coal. This is a frivolous claim. There has been no systematic monitoring of death rates among uranium miners.

The fact is that nuclear power is encouraged by anti-worker governments. They hope to use it to break the power of coal miners to defend their living standards and safety conditions. Britain's Margaret Thatcher uses the nuclear industry to blackmail miners to accept lower safety standards.

While uranium mining is particularly dangerous, the huge scale of all modern mining enterprises can lead to massive and permanent environmental damage.

Land rights

All mining should be subject to strict controls. The strip mining of bauxite for

