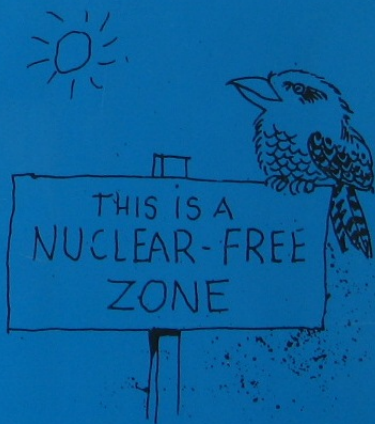


# NUCLEAR FREE ZONES: SOME BASIC QUESTIONS

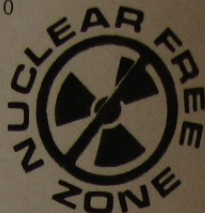


KEITH D SUTER

AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR FREE ZONES SECRETARIAT

Melbourne Office : Town Hall, Melbourne 3000  
(03) 63 0421

Sydney Office : Town Hall, Sydney 2000  
(02) 265 9227



25th April 1985

Dear Friends,

Please find enclosed a complimentary copy of Nuclear Free Zones : Some Basic Questions and an order form for additional copies.

The Secretariat believes that this booklet will assist local groups in campaigning for a nuclear free zone in their area. The booklet is specially aimed at local government and will be of value to Councils that are considering this issue.

I hope that your group finds this booklet useful in assessing the value of running a nuclear free zone campaign in your area or in working more closely with your local Council on these issues.

I look forward to closer contact between local groups, the Secretariat and local Councils. I realise that many groups are still busy with post Rally work and apologise for yet another mailout.

Yours sincerely,

Eddie Beacham, Chairperson

# LOCAL GOVERNMENT.... SIGN OF THE TIMES



THIS IS A  
NUCLEAR-FREE  
ZONE

Local Government is broadening its horizons. Issues confronting local communities extend beyond municipal boundaries. Achieving world peace and disarmament is everyone's responsibility.

Local Government nuclear free zones are a vital step towards a nuclear free future for Australia. Do you live in a nuclear free zone?



The AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR FREE ZONES SECRETARIAT has recently produced a booklet on local nuclear free zones. This booklet could be used in campaigns for a nuclear free zone and by Councils to explain to their community the significance of their local nuclear free zone.

Copies can be ordered from ANFZS c/- Town Hall, Melbourne or ring Chris Johnston on 63 0421 ext.2512.

Prices : \$2.00 each : 10 for \$17 : 50 for \$65

We would like to order \_\_\_\_\_ copies of NUCLEAR FREE ZONES: SOME BASIC QUESTIONS by Keith Suter.  
Please find enclosed a cheque/money order for the total cost of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (plus international postage if applicable)

Please post these to (name) : \_\_\_\_\_

(organisation) \_\_\_\_\_

(address) \_\_\_\_\_

postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

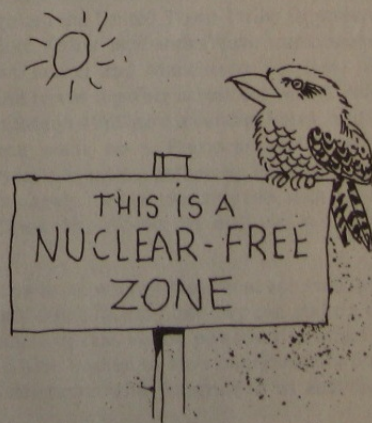
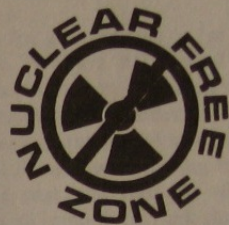
This booklet is published as a contribution to the debate over the arms race. It is produced with the financial support of the Victorian Government, which passed legislation making Victoria a nuclear free state.

Cartoons by Rolf Hermann.

ISBN: 0 958 9965 0 4  
Publisher: Australian Nuclear Free Zone Secretariat  
Town Hall, SYDNEY NSW 2000

THINK GLOBALLY ACT LOCALLY

AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR FREE ZONES SECRETARIAT



## THINK GLOBALLY ACT LOCALLY.

David Blunkett, Leader of the UK Sheffield City Council since 1980, has set his reasons for involvement:

Peace is not only a matter for governments or for politicians — it is the concern of everyone. We are not bound by the national boundaries which surround us, nor by the edicts of those who wish to foster the notion of outside threat in order to convince us that the operation of our democracy or the use of our resources should be bent in a particular way. Lifting town twinning from the bonhomie of civic banquets of the past and into the dialogue of peace, prosperity and equality is all-important. Link that with civil rights which are threatened by suppression which is justified by supposed external threat and you have a real opportunity to ensure that speaking and competing together can make a difference.

Declarations have not only been drawn up and signed, they have been widely publicised in the communities concerned. This applies in the case of the Sheffield City Council initiative, not only with its major industrial twin town in the Ruhr-Bochum, but with the industrial city of Donetsk in the Ukraine. The cities have followed this up by approaches through the United Town Twins Organisation to initiate a snowball effect. Other authorities have simultaneously and since taken their own action and Manchester has been instrumental in getting cities and towns together across the world. Additionally, the Madrid Conference in 1983 gave a further boost, and similar efforts have since been made on a European and international basis, including this year's Montreal gathering. Sheffield has made limited progress with its newly formed twinning link with the city of Anshan in northeast China, but at least the dialogue has begun.

Once again it has to be stressed that these are small pinpricks in the overall problems which face us; but they can make a difference. We have to stop believing that we are powerless to affect what happens around us. We have instead to have confidence in ourselves and in our ability to determine what happens to us and those who come after us. (1)

## ISN'T THIS THE CONCERN OF THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT?

The arms race is the greatest problem confronting the world. This is recognised in the 1978 UN General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament Final Document in which it is declared that the world's population "today is confronted with an unprecedented threat of self extinction arising from the massive and competitive accumulation of the most destructive weapons ever produced".

Local government, as the tier of government closest to the people, is well placed to carry the fears and concerns of the community to other levels of government in Australia and overseas.

By declaring a Nuclear Free Zone, a Council is thinking globally and acting locally.

Under our three tier system of government, local government has strictly defined areas of responsibility. And yet no Council is an island on its own. Each Council depends ultimately for its continued existence upon international peace and security and international co-operation. While Councils are unable to be involved directly in international negotiations on the arms race, they can at least express their point of view as to what can be done.

The Nuclear Free Zones campaign has been one of the key factors in alerting Australians to the dangers of the arms race. While some Councils still debate whether or not there would be any value in declaring themselves Nuclear Free Zones, the zones which are already in existence have helped shape the national awareness of the need for multilateral disarmament.

Even though a zone may have limited legal significance, it does have an important symbolic role. Symbols play an important part in all

societies. We take part, for example, in Anzac Day activities and yet we know that they cannot bring about the resurrection of the dead. Council chambers consist of various flags and other symbols which are important for the local community. There are also holidays, religious symbols and observances that have significance for citizens. The erection of Nuclear Free Zone signs, therefore, is important as part of the symbols of the local community.

Municipal-level nuclear free zones are evidence of support for the United Nations disarmament campaign which has been endorsed by the Australian Government.

The main purpose of this booklet is to examine the basic questions which have arisen in Council and local media debates over the creation of Nuclear Free Zones. It is hoped that the provision of answers will reassure people of the value of Nuclear Free Zones and encourage still more Councils to declare themselves nuclear free. It also contains ideas by which Nuclear Free Councils can maintain their work towards a nuclear free world.

In reading reports of Council and local media debates on the creation of Nuclear Free Zones, the basic questions asked seem to fall into categories:

- \* the nature of the arms race itself;
- \* clarification of the two types of nuclear free zones;
- \* the role of nuclear power in the nuclear free zone debate; and
- \* the specifics of Australian Nuclear Free Zones.

While this small publication hopes to cover the basic questions, there may still be some other points needing clarification. These could be addressed to the Australian Nuclear Free Zones Secretariat. The addresses are listed later in the booklet.

## THE ARMS RACE

### Why worry about the arms race?

History shows that arms races often spill over into armed conflict. During the past few hundred years, most such arms races have resulted in war rather than in a disarmament treaty, or with one side backing down. On current indications, World War III is more likely than peace breaking out. In a sense, the present political situation is like Europe at the beginning of this century, with intense rivalry between the various nations, requiring only a small event to trigger a conflict.

Some people seem to think that World War III will be a good thing; it will help the economy, revive the steel industry and get rid of the unemployed.

Many people seem to assume that World War III will only be slightly larger than World War II. But the US and Soviet Union have enough nuclear weapons to fight the equivalent of 5,000 World War IIs in an afternoon. During World War II, the equivalent of 3 million tons of TNT were used (including the two bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki — which are so small by current standards they are not even included in disarmament negotiations). The US and Soviet Union now have the equivalent of 16,000 million tons of TNT in nuclear weapons.

### But hasn't nuclear deterrence kept us safe?

It has so far avoided a head-on collision between the United States and Soviet Union, which have preferred to fight each other indirectly, as in the Middle East. However, even ignoring the human cost of recent conflicts, nuclear deterrence is not necessarily a safe policy.

First, each government assumes that all other governments will act rationally and that there is only one common perception of "rationality" which characterises all governments. Nuclear deterrence, therefore, has no time for irrational behaviour or insanity. Unfortunately, historical experience shows that not all governments act rationally all the time.

Second, there is the ironical role of trust between enemies. Since 1945 it has been impossible for any defending force to destroy entirely an incoming attack.

By contrast, for example, during World War II, it was necessary for the RAF to shoot down only 10% of the incoming German aircraft during the Battle of Britain to stop Hitler's attempt to invade Britain. Never before has a great power (or super power) been unable to guarantee an adequate defence of its people. The essence of nuclear deterrence is, therefore, a mutual trust between mutually hostile nations. American and Soviet leaders therefore trust one another to act rationally and not to launch their nuclear missiles. If they do launch their missiles, the other side cannot destroy them — all it can do is to retaliate by destroying the attacking nation. Thus we have the irony that in order to survive mutually antagonistic nations must have a high degree of mutual trust.

Third, there is the ironical relationship between the need to maintain nuclear deterrence and yet also to stop the spread ("proliferation") of nuclear weapons. Advocates of nuclear deterrence are among the most firm opponents of nuclear proliferation. However, if they were to be fully consistent, they would need to ensure that each nation around the world had nuclear weapons.

*Deterrence?  
It works because  
of the enemies' trust  
to kill each other in  
case of war.*

*Then why do they want more  
and more bombs?*

*Because they trust  
each other more than  
they trust themselves...*



After all, the essence of nuclear deterrence is that a nation which has nuclear weapons will not attack any other nation for fear of retaliation. According to this theory, therefore, each nation should have nuclear weapons so that it will not attack any other nation and so there will be no more international conflicts. However, the advocates of nuclear deterrence trust certain nations (notably the Americans and Russians) but do not trust other nations, such as Libya and Iran.

### What about accidents?

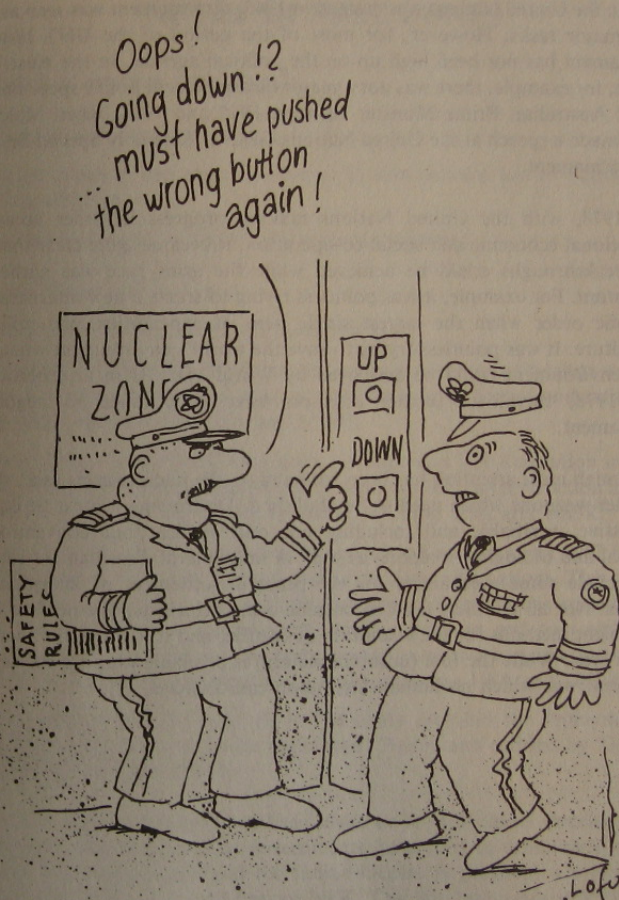
Nuclear deterrence theory leaves no room for accidents. Unlike the days of the bomber, for example, a nuclear missile cannot be returned to base after it has been launched nor can it with any certainty be destroyed in mid-air with existing defence technology. No computer programmer can ever expect to cover all eventualities.

For example, there has been a debate over the destruction of HMS Sheffield during the Falkland Islands conflict. This \$100 million ship was destroyed by a \$100,000 Exorcet missile. HMS Sheffield contained all the latest electronic gadgetry for sending up decoy materials to take evasive action to cope with such an attack. Therefore, why did it not act against the incoming Exorcet missile? Initially it was thought that the computer system did not detect the Exorcet. However, it has since been speculated that in fact the computer system did detect the incoming Exorcet. But when the computer was being programmed it was told the Exorcet was a French missile (with British components); France is a NATO ally, and therefore no Exorcet missile would ever be fired at a NATO ally. Consequently, when the computer detected the incoming Exorcet missile it decided that it was a friendly missile.

### But disarmament has never worked

The problem with disarmament is not that it has been tried and failed — it has not been tried. The world is far more expert and experienced at planning for war than it is for planning for peace.

There have been only four extensive attempts this century at trying to negotiate disarmament. The first occurred in 1899 and 1907 at The Hague. The Hague Peace Conference failed to negotiate disarmament, though progress was made in regulating the way in which war was to be fought.



In the next attempt the two great powers of the day (the UK and France) played generally negative roles which undermined the Conference — despite the willingness of the US and Soviet Union to play more positive roles.

When the United Nations was created in 1945, disarmament was seen as one of its major tasks. However, for most of the period of the UN's history, disarmament has not been high up on the political agenda. In the Australian context, for example, there was not a major disarmament policy speech made by any Australian Prime Minister between 1945 and 1978, when Malcolm Fraser made a speech at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Disarmament.

By 1978, with the United Nations making progress in other areas of international economic and social co-operation, it became quite clear that no new breakthroughs could be achieved while the arms race was gathering momentum. For example, it was pointless trying to create a new international economic order when the largest single item of expenditure was military expenditure. It was pointless trying to save the world's environment when the entire environment could be destroyed by World War III in an afternoon. Since 1978, therefore, further attempts have been made to negotiate disarmament.

Although most attention has been focussed on the nuclear arms race, there are other weapons which need to be abolished. Disarmament must be equal, progressive, verifiable and including not only nuclear but conventional, chemical and biological weapons as well. A multilateral disarmament should also include some mechanism for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Not all conflicts need to become armed conflicts. We need to find non-violent methods for the resolution of conflict and to remove the fuel for nuclear war. While the fuel (uranium mainly) is available we have the threat of nuclear war which no human institution can dissolve.

## “NUCLEAR FREE ZONES”

### What is a nuclear free zone?

There are two types of zone:

- nuclear weapon free zone: as covered by international law or national law or constitution
- nuclear free zone: as declared by a local authority

### *Nuclear Weapon Free Zone*

There are four Nuclear Free Zone Treaties:-

- Antarctic Treaty 1959: Prohibits the storage and testing of nuclear weapons and the storage of nuclear waste at the South Pole. Signed and ratified by 26 states including the USA and USSR.
- Outer Space Treaty 1967: Originally adopted as a UN Resolution in 1963, this treaty prohibits the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in outer space. Signed and ratified by 83 states including USA and USSR.
- Treaty for Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America 1967 (Treaty of Tlateloco). Signed by Central and South American nations. This created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America: political parties agreed not to test, store, deploy or manufacture nuclear weapons and two additional protocols facilitated pledges by nuclear-weapon nations to assist the treaties' purpose. Signed and ratified by 24 states including USA and USSR.
- International Seabed Treaty 1971: The treaty prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on or under the seabed. Signed and ratified by 73 states including USA and USSR.

Various other proposals have been made or are still under consideration. For over a decade Australian governments have tried to establish a similar zone in the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean. A proposal was made by Poland in 1956 for a central Europe NFZ. This has been revived from time to time. Most recently (1982) the Independent Commission on Disarmament (chaired by Swedish politician Olaf Palme) has recommended a battlefield NFZ extending 150 kilometres on both sides of the Iron Curtain. For several years, there has been discussions about a Nordic NFZ. In 1981, Israel proposed a Middle East NFZ.



In 1984, the New Zealand Labour Government declared the entire country a nuclear free zone. There are eleven other countries (2) which through national law or constitution, explicitly or implicitly prohibit nuclear weapons. They are: Austria; Faero Islands; Greenland; Japan; Malta; The Commonwealth of Northern Marianas; Republic of Belou; The Federated States of Micronesia; The Seychelles; The Solomons; Vanuatu.

### *Nuclear Free Zone*

The second type of nuclear free zone is a public statement of opposition to the arms build up, nuclear industry and uranium mining: consciousness raising exercises.

Most nuclear free zones are declared by municipal councils. These decisions are manifested by the erection of signs about the municipalities boundaries, explanations to ratepayers as to why the decision has been made, and financial support for co-ordinating organisations seeking to obtain greater support for ending the arms race. In New Zealand, 1,972,257 people (over 65% of the population) live in 95 nuclear free zones. Wales is now entirely nuclear free: it has been declared so by county council. All of these decisions carry limited legal significance.

### **Who can declare a nuclear free zone?**

Anyone with authority over a specific location. Governments declare nuclear free zones collectively (such as through the Antarctic Treaty) or individually (as New Zealand did in 1984). Most of this booklet is concerned with municipal zones.

It is not only shires, cities and municipalities that have been declared nuclear free zones. The UK Methodist Church has suggested that there be nuclear free parishes. A similar initiative is under way in the US to create nuclear free zones in religious communities (churches, synagogues, mosques etc). Australia now has nuclear free schools, family homes and coal mines.

### **How did the nuclear free zones movement begin?**

In Australia, the nuclear free zone movement was sparked by the Movement Against Uranium Mining. In support of a ban on all uranium mining, the movement asked sympathetic Councils to endorse NFZ resolutions that

banned all non-medical nuclear materials. The first to declare itself a NFZ is thought to have been Fitzroy in Victoria. Fitzroy was also the first to put up signs saying "You are now entering a Nuclear Free Zone".

In England, the city of Manchester adopted an NFZ resolution in November 1980, and within two years, was followed by over 160 British towns, cities and counties. All of Wales is Nuclear Free (county by county) and 31 of 51 million Britons are now represented by Nuclear Free Authorities. English NFZ resolutions are not legally binding, however, and are rejected by the Thatcher Government. Most Nuclear Free Authorities refuse to participate in civil defence planning. This forced the Government in 1982 to cancel "hardrock" its national civil defence exercise. They cancelled it again in 1983.

The first NFZ campaign in the United States took place in Santa Cruz County, California, in June 1980. The proposed ordinance was defeated by a 63-37% margin. The Lockheed Missile and Space Company, which would have been forced by the measure to terminate work on the Trident missile system, spent over \$150,000 on voter opinion research and direct mail to defeat it. Garrett Park, Maryland, became the US's first NFZ in May 1982.

Inspired by the declaration of English communities, its citizens overwhelmingly approved the world's first NFZ ordinance. The City Council of Sykesville, Maryland, passed an NFZ resolution in June 1982 by a vote of 5 to 1. At the same meeting, they unanimously approved the "freeze" resolution and rejected crisis relocation planning for nuclear war. Ashland, Oregon, adopted an NFZ ordinance by referendum in the November 1982 elections; 55% in favour. The ordinance was the first to detail penalties for violations — up to \$500 fine and/or six months in jail. Roosevelt, New Jersey, passed an NFZ resolution in the November elections (89% in favour). In January 1983, the town council and mayor unanimously adopted the NFZ as an ordinance, with the same penalties as in Ashland. In January 1985, there were municipal-level nuclear free zones in the United States.

In Japan, the campaign to eliminate nuclear weapons and achieve global peace has developed in various ways within the community. One of them is the nuclear free zone declaration made by over 170 local government bodies. Within Kanagawa, not only has the prefecture itself been declared nuclear free, but the cities of Kawasaki, Fujisawa, and Zama and the towns of Hayama and Ninomiya have made their own declarations. They were recently joined by Yokosuka, and Yokohama is also showing signs of following suit.



Yokosuka is a particularly noteworthy case as it is the site of a United States Naval Base of key importance in the Far East, and it is feared that the arrival in port of warships scheduled to carry the Tomahawk nuclear cruise missile may herald conversion of the base to nuclear weaponry. On 10 September 1984, therefore, the Yokosuka City Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution calling for nuclear disarmament. The text seeks strict observance of the three non-nuclear principles in Japan's national policy: no possession, manufacture or introduction of nuclear arms. It appeals strongly to other nations of the world to reduce their armaments and rid themselves of all nuclear weapons.

In Australia, there are 91 known municipal-level nuclear free zones. The Australian Capital Territory has been declared nuclear free by a House of

Assembly Resolution and the State of Victoria has been made nuclear free through legislation, which was not opposed by the Liberal Party.

There are 1,862 known nuclear free zone local communities in countries around the world. These have been declared by cities, towns, shires and counties (February 1985). (3)

Argentina	1	Italy	53
Australia	91	Japan	299
Belgium	281	Netherlands	71
Canada	64	New Zealand	95
Denmark	8	Norway	106
Great Britain (over 60% of the population including all of Wales)		West Germany	95
Greece	1	Spain	350
Ireland	117	USA	80

**All these examples are in the West — what about the communists?**

The peace movement in communist countries do not have the freedom to organise, that is enjoyed in nations such as Australia. In some countries of eastern Europe, non-governmental activity which appears to be attacking the government or subverting the state is regarded as anti-government or anti-citizen and therefore a type of treason.

In many of the countries of the Soviet bloc there are two peace movements. One part is recognised by the national government and is careful to maintain a public position similar to the government's. Debate in those nations is not public, but it goes on in private. Some of the members of this movement do press their government privately to be more co-operative in the disarmament negotiations.

The second peace movement is part of the independent movement courageously and openly calling for substantial changes to the nation. Some Western peace movement activities show solidarity with these people. After all, they have some points in common. All humans, irrespective of nationality, are threatened by the arms race. Western peace activists are sometimes called "communists" or "Moscow sympathisers"; communist dissidents are regarded as criminals. But they do show, east and west, a profound worry

about where the current arms race is leading. Languages, political systems and ideologies may be different but the fears are similar.

### Even if there were disarmament — surely we couldn't trust the Russians?

The people who make that statement are, ironically, the people who trust them most, namely, those who believe that nuclear deterrence is the best way of preserving world peace.

In order to be able to understand the arms race, it helps to be schizophrenic. On the one hand, the two super powers are busily arming against one another. On the other hand, both are co-operating with one another in various non-military areas. The Soviet Union is the world's largest grain importer: Kansas, to a certain extent, is the bread basket of the Soviet Union.

An Australian in 1985 would have the same experience. Beginning in 1945, Australia was allied with the Soviet Union against Germany and Japan. It was then later concerned with China. Later on it was North Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and now we are worried about the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, Japan is now seen as an allied nation; China is now seen much more favourably, including by people who less than two decades ago supported Australia's role in Vietnam as a way of stopping the spread of Chinese influence.

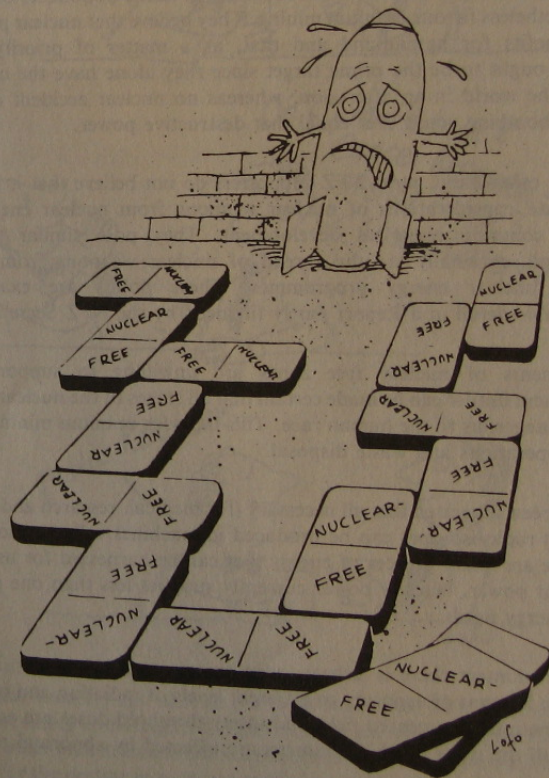
An important way of ending the arms race is to place emphasis on human contact. Alarmist speeches about the Red Peril or the Yellow Peril can seem much more plausible in the abstract. They cease to be so alarming when people have visited those nations and recognise that in fact those nations consist of fellow human beings. This means not only Westerners getting to learn more about the Soviet Union (or whatever), but by the same token encouraging those nations to realise that we are not bloodthirsty barbarians either. Councils can also help in this by twinning with cities in those countries.

### Does the Australian Peace Movement consider only Western disarmament?

The Australian peace movement is not a unilateralist movement. It is concerned about multilateral disarmament: east and west, but it has taken a stand in support of the unilateralist stance of the New Zealand Government against visits to the country by nuclear powered or armed ships. The

Australian peace movement is as worried about the Australian defence system as the Department of Defence. There are many different ideas on what defence system Australia ought to have, the debate goes in not only in the Department of Defence but also in the peace movement.

### NUCLEAR-FREE DOMINOES



## NUCLEAR POWER

### What about nuclear power?

Most advocates of Nuclear Free Zones oppose the arms race, nuclear power and uranium mining. The movement for nuclear free zones began with the anti-uranium movement.

There are two points of view on this matter. Some opponents of the arms race nonetheless favour uranium mining. They believe that nuclear power does have benefits for humankind and that, as a matter of priority, nuclear weapons ought to be the prime target since they alone have the capacity to destroy the world in an afternoon, whereas no nuclear accident or nuclear terrorist bombing could ever equal that destructive power.

On the other hand, most NFZ supporters do not believe that it is possible to separate considerations of nuclear weapons from nuclear energy. They share a common historical development. They pose similar threats to humankind, especially via the spread of nuclear weapons from so-called peaceful nuclear energy programmes. These points are examined in considerable detail in a Report partly financed by the NFZ Secretariat (3).

Proponents of nuclear free zones are unwilling to support nuclear development until it can be made certain that all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle are not dangerous to the human race. This includes uranium mining, nuclear reactor operations and waste disposal.

It has been suggested that all necessary (for medical, research and industrial purposes) radio isotopes can be produced in machines called cyclotrons and that there are many sources of energy that can be harnessed for use, instead of nuclear power. Nuclear power currently supplies less than one percent of global energy needs.

At the moment there is debate, even among specialist scientists, on the effects on humans of exposure to different levels of radiation and on whether the internationally accepted risks and safety-threshold doses are adequate to address all the ways in which humans are affected by abnormal radioactive activity.

Mind you,  
the nuclear industry would  
expand my line of work...



Oh? What's that?  
Cancer Research?  
Police Force?  
Undertakers?



Public Relations.



The nuclear industry can also be criticised because of its lack of economic viability. The safety levels required in this industry are more stringent than those applying in other industries and the last of these has generally been attributed as the reason for the decline in nuclear reactor construction in the United States.

## What do people think about the "peaceful" uses of nuclear energy?

Their problem turns on the definition of "peaceful uses". The massive Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry, as one of its principal findings, stated:

The nuclear power industry is unintentionally contributing to an increased risk of nuclear war. This is the most serious hazard associated with the industry. (4)

Nuclear weapons are made from materials which can be obtained from the technology of the commercial nuclear fuel cycle and from the reprocessing of spent fuel.

An opinion poll last year, published in the conservative magazine *The Bulletin*, revealed an interesting split in public attitudes on the 'peaceful' use of nuclear energy. The opinion poll asked these questions:

Question	Yes	No	Unsure
About developing and exporting uranium for peaceful purposes. Do you think Australia should or should not develop and export uranium for peaceful purposes?	65	29	6
Do you agree or disagree with mining Australian uranium?	62	31	7
Is there anything about mining and exporting uranium that worries you?	61	32	7
	(worried)	(not worried)	

It is notable that almost the same percentage of people who favoured uranium mining also admitted to some worries about it:

People who said they had worries often said: "It may not be used for peaceful purposes", "The uranium can be used for making nuclear weapons", "It could cause a nuclear war", and "What happens to the nuclear waste?". (5)

In other words, the degree of solid, unhesitating public support for uranium is not as large as is often claimed.

Many local government authorities and people in the wider community are concerned about questions of waste disposal, the safety of nuclear reactors and the morality of mining uranium.

It is not only Australians that are worried about nuclear power. The British Government commissioned the Sizewell Public Inquiry into the development of new nuclear power stations. A notable witness was Tony Benn, who has been the longest-serving energy minister in any western nation. He began his eight years of responsibility for nuclear power as a major supporter of it. He is now an opponent of it. The introduction of the commercial publication of Mr Benn's evidence to the Sizewell Inquiry was written by Sir Kelvin Spencer, former Chief Scientist to the UK Ministry of Power. Like the former minister, Sir Kelvin Spencer is now opposed to nuclear power:

I happened to be Chief Scientist at the Ministry of Power at the time, and I accepted with enthusiasm the prospect which "Atoms for Peace" seemed to hold out. Remember Science had emerged from the war with immense prestige, crowned by the success of the atomic bomb. Many scientists, outside as well as inside government service, had succumbed to this adulation by the public in general, I being as over-confident as the rest. We really thought, we in government service and scientists in general, that we had identified in principle all the major hazards involved in this civil use of nuclear power. And we really thought that a large enough programme of research and development together with gradually accumulating experience of operating nuclear stations, would ensure that all these hazards would be adequately coped with. How wrong we were!

I left government service at the end of the 1950s in the comfortable conviction that all was going well. The first nuclear station had not yet come into commission. But, as the years went on snags arose, more and more. Thus I changed from being an advocate for the civil exploitation of nuclear energy to being an opponent.

Tony Benn started his House of Commons career in 1950 and attained Cabinet rank in 1966. In all, he has had eight years as Cabinet Minister responsible for nuclear energy. He describes in his

book how his views changed just as mine have. In this evidence he sums up his present views as follows: "I would be happy to see nuclear power phased out and I could not honestly recommend a further ordering programme."

I think it is because we both changed from being advocates to being opposers that he has invited me to write this foreword. Our reasons for the change may not always coincide. He has had a much wider experience than I have, and has shouldered vastly greater responsibilities. My reasons for change I have set out in a few articles I've written, on request, for various journalists. Briefly, it seems to me that some scientists, when they get tied up in some aspect of nuclear technology, lose some measure of intellectual integrity. They do not hesitate to assure the public that sufficient is known about this new science to make sure that any residual risk there may be is small compared with the alleged benefits. (And what standing has a scientist in balancing assumed benefits against risks?) Tony Benn's statement "You have to nigger away and find out if anyone has a vested interest in suppressing information about hazards" applies, alas, to some scientists who, again in Tony Benn's words have "an attachment to nuclear reactors . . . as embracing by those who have that view as that of religious conviction." (6)

### What about nuclear medicine?

Many nuclear free zones have specific exclusions for medical isotopes, research (non-military) and the industrial usage of radioactive isotopes.

All hospitals and research institutions practising nuclear medicine are completely unaffected by the establishment of a NFZ. The NFZ campaign is directed against the harmful impact of uranium — not nuclear medicine. The Australian Nuclear Free Zones Secretariat is in favour of isotopes produced in the more benign technology of the cyclotron.

The Secretariat has written to the Prime Minister to express its concern at the way radioactive waste, from industry, hospitals and research, is currently stored. The Prime Minister was asked to look at and establish a central storage area for radioactive waste.

## NUCLEAR FREE ZONES IN AUSTRALIA

The State of Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory have both been declared nuclear free zones.

Victoria now has legislation (The Nuclear Activities (Prohibition) Act) which prohibits the construction of nuclear power plants and uranium mining. The provisions of the Act ensure that Victoria will not contribute to the nuclear fuel cycle and that problems of nuclear waste won't threaten the environment.

### Are nuclear free zones legal?

In Australia at the end of 1984, there were 91 known municipal-level nuclear free zones. While it appears that there are no specific provisions for nuclear free zones in legislation on local government, in any state, nuclear free zones are not illegal.

They have an important symbolic function even though local Councils don't have power over the nuclear fuel cycle which is initiated and largely controlled by the Federal Government.

Although the declaration of a nuclear free zone has varied from council to council, policies have been declared on the following principles:

1. Opposition to the construction of nuclear power plants, including power stations, uranium enrichment plants and reprocessing.
2. Opposition to the storage and disposal of radioactive waste materials close to population centres and in any form dangerous to life forms.
3. Opposition to the prospecting of mining and export of uranium.
4. Opposition to the manufacture of component parts for nuclear weapons.
5. Opposition to the siting of any nuclear weapons.
6. Opposition to port of call and landing rights arrangements to all foreign nuclear forces including nuclear armed or nuclear powered vessels and aircraft.
7. The use, storage, disposal and transport of radioactive materials for industry or for power generation in the present stage of knowledge

(excepting medical, research isotopes and x-rays) within the area until a further resolution.

8. Support for the United Nations disarmament campaign.
9. Support for mutually verifiable multilateral nuclear disarmament.
10. Support for the establishment of Nuclear Free Zones in the Pacific and Indian Oceans including the banning of all nuclear testing and waste dumping.
11. Refusal to participate in civil defence planning for a direct nuclear attack as it will be impossible to provide adequate protection for citizens.
12. Sponsoring of activities to promote a nuclear free and peaceful future.
13. Promoting the use of alternative sources of energy and energy conservation.

Exclusions in the policy have included:-

1. Research and application of nuclear medicine.
2. Basic research, the primary purpose of which is not to work towards the development of nuclear weapons.
3. Uses of fissionable materials for smoke detectors, light emitting watches and clocks, and other applications the primary purpose of which is not to work towards the development of nuclear weapons.

### But the whole thing seems very political

Most matters determined by Council have a political component. A decision, for example, to permit one type of development application and yet to reject another may have political overtones.

It is important to make sure that the subject does not become party political. The previous Australian Government in the late 1970s began to give Australia a higher profile in international disarmament debate. This has continued under the present government. While political parties differ on some ideas, all agree on the need for multilateral disarmament. Australians are very active at criticising politicians when they make errors. It is equally necessary to affirm them in their work for multilateral disarmament. The key to ending the arms race is to be found in the mobilisation of public opinion, since public opinion

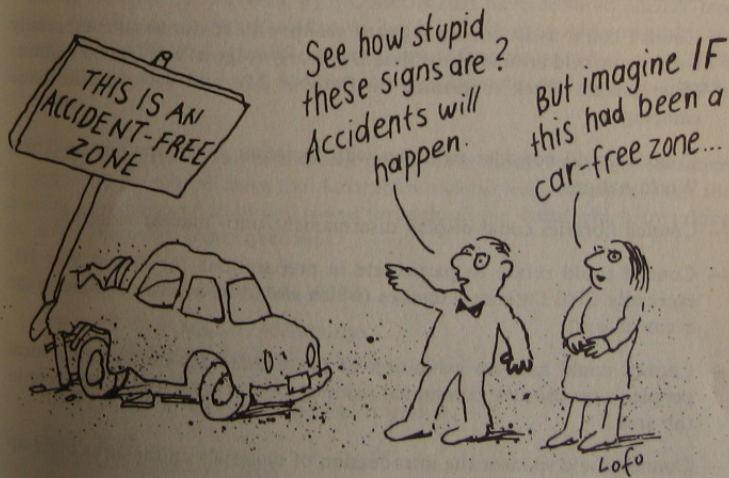
will produce the political will which is necessary to force governments to negotiate multilateral disarmament.

### How does council declare itself nuclear free?

Council could adopt a Resolution based on the following draft:

Council resolves to declare the City of/Municipality/Shire a Nuclear Free Zone and requests the Town Clerk/Shire to take appropriate action to erect "NUCLEAR FREE ZONE" signs at appropriate positions on Council's external boundaries to advertise Council's decision.

Council's decision is taken to place on public record its opposition to the proliferation of nuclear weapons and its grave concerns about the dangers associated with nuclear power.



## What happens next?

It is obviously important that Council recognise that its work does not cease with the adoption of a Resolution and the erection of "Nuclear Free Zones" signs. The following actions could be carried out:-

- Stickers could be attached to Council vehicles: "This is a Nuclear Free Zone" around a coat of arms.
- Publicity to Council decisions could be given in local newspapers and bodies such as state and federal governments.
- Contacting other Councils to inform them of the decision.
- Council could survey its own energy usage viz waste disposal, vehicles, heating of buildings and promote energy conservation within its own activities. On larger scale, Councils which distribute electricity could promote community schemes such as rate-rebates for solar heating installation, and use of low energy principles in planning.
- Council could assist the local peace group with resources and especially with events held around Hiroshima Day (early August) and United Nations Disarmament Week (beginning on October 24), and with specific issue campaigns.
- Council could consider twinning with locations in communist or Third World nations.
- Council libraries could display disarmament/anti- nuclear material.
- Council could refuse to participate in preparations for World War III, especially Civil Defence Exercises (which would be a waste of time in the event of war).
- Council could hold an exhibition of peace materials produced by local people or sponsor the communal painting of a peace mural somewhere in the area.
- Council could sponsor the introduction of materials on the arms build-up and on energy usage to local schools.
- Council could mark events, such as Hiroshima Day and United Nations Disarmament Week, through ceremonies such as a tree-planting, and participate in other events such as a Disarmament Rally.

## WHAT IS THE AUSTRALIAN NUCLEAR FREE ZONES SECRETARIAT?

The Secretariat was formed at a National Local Government Meeting held at the Sydney Town Hall on 8 April 1983. The organisation is strictly non-party political. Councils represented at the original meeting included the major capital cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, as well as Fremantle in Western Australia and a range of City, Municipal and Shire Councils from across Australia, all of which are Nuclear Free Zones. Funding for the costs of the operation of the Secretariat are borne by the local Councils which are members of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat's membership includes a range of cities and municipalities transgressing many traditional political differences but united in their opposition to the mining of Australian uranium and the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The Secretariat can network with Councils that have declared nuclear free zones, assisting in campaigns and providing information to Aldermen who are members of affiliated Councils, it can carry the issues on which these local Councils have taken a stand, to other levels of Government, in Australia and overseas.

Besides being significant in domestic politics, the nuclear free zone movement is important because it links the Australian anti-nuclear movement with the growing movement of cities and towns throughout the world which are taking an active stance on these questions.

The offices of the Secretariat are at:

Shop 17, City Square, Melbourne  
Town Hall House, Sydney.

Mail can be addressed to the Secretariat at:

Town Hall  
MELBOURNE VIC 3000  
(03) 630421

Town Hall  
SYDNEY NSW 2000  
(02) 20263



## NOTES

- (1) David Blunkett "Nuclear Free Zones — Silly or Sane?" *Sanity* (London) November 1984, p 17.
- (2) *The New Abolitionist* Newsletter of Nuclear Free America Vol 2, No. 4, July/August 1984.
- (3) *The New Abolitionist* Newsletter of Nuclear Free America, Vol 2, No. 5, February 1985.
- (4) Independent Committee of Inquiry into the Nuclear Weapons and Other Consequences of Australian Uranium Mining *Australia and the Nuclear Choice* Sydney: Total Environment Centre, 1984.
- (5) Ranger Uranium Environmental Inquiry *First Report* Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976, p 185.
- (6) "Most Still Favour Exporting Uranium" *The Bulletin* (Sydney) 29 May 1984, p 34.
- (7) *The Sizewell Syndrome* Nottingham, England: Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1984, pp 2-3.

## NUCLEAR FREE ZONES LIST OF COUNCILS

(Current at 15th January 1985)

**Victoria (36)**

Ararat City Council  
 Bellarine Shire Council  
 Brighton City Council  
 Broadmeadows City Council  
 Brunswick City Council  
 Chelsea City Council  
 Coburg City Council  
 Collingwood City Council  
 Croydon City Council  
 Diamond Valley Shire Council  
 Eltham Shire Council  
 Essendon City Council  
 Fitzroy City Council  
 Footscray City Council  
 Frankston City Council  
 Heidelberg City Council  
 Keilor City Council  
 Melbourne City Council  
 Melton Shire Council \*  
 Moorabbin City Council  
 Mornington Shire Council  
 Northcote City Council  
 Nunawading City Council  
 Oakleigh City Council  
 Port Melbourne City Council  
 Preston City Council  
 Richmond City Council  
 Ringwood City Council  
 Sherbrooke Shire Council  
 Springvale City Council  
 South Melbourne City Council  
 St. Kilda City Council  
 Sunshir City Council  
 Traralgon City Council  
 Whittlesea Shire Council  
 Williamstown City Council

**Queensland (10)**

Bowen Shire Council  
 Brisbane City Council  
 Caboolture Shire Council  
 Gold Coast City Council  
 Ipswich City Council  
 Logan City Council  
 Maroochy Shire Council  
 Noosa Shire Council  
 Pine Rivers Shire Council  
 Toowoomba City Council

- \* Nuclear war free zone
- + Nuclear safe zone

**New South Wales (36)**

Armidale City Council  
 Bankstown City Council  
 Blacktown City Council  
 Blue Mountains City Council  
 Botany City Council  
 Broken Hill City Council  
 Byron Bay Shire Council  
 Campbelltown City Council  
 Canterbury Municipal Council  
 Coneord Municipal Council  
 Drummoine Municipal Council  
 Gosford City Council  
 Greater Cessnock City Council  
 Greater Lithgow City Council  
 Griffith Shire Council  
 Hastings Municipal Council  
 Hawkesbury Shire Council  
 Kiama Municipal Council  
 Lake Macquarie Municipal Council  
 Leichhardt Municipal Council  
 Lismore City Council  
 Liverpool City Council  
 Maitland City Council  
 Marrickville Municipal Council  
 Nambucca Shire Council  
 Newcastle City Council  
 Parramatta City Council  
 Penrith City Council  
 Randwick Municipal Council  
 Shellharbour Municipal Council  
 Sydney City Council  
 Warringah Shire Council  
 Waverley Shire Council  
 Wentworth Shire Council  
 Woollongong City Council  
 Wyong Shire Council

**Western Australia (7)**

Bayswater Shire Council  
 Belmont Shire Council  
 Cockburn City Council  
 Denmark Shire Council  
 Fremantle City Council  
 Kwinana Town Council  
 Wanneroo Shire Council

**South Australia (2)**

Port Adelaide City Council  
 Kensington and Norwood City Council +

SIR: "Nuclear-free zone". I read this notice unexpectedly as I drove into Sydney with my sister and her family with whom my son and I are spending a short holiday.

The spontaneous feeling of reassurance and sensation of hope it generated has prompted me to write this letter on Anzac Day.

We live in Portsmouth, England, and with the knowledge that more nuclear bombs are directed at us than any other part of Europe. The warships in the harbour, the communication networks on the hills behind, the new torpedo factory built on land previously called Brambles Farm and the roads closed to certain traffic when Cruise missile practices take place are daily reminders of nuclear reality. It was indeed a feeling of relief to enter Sydney.

Today is Anzac Day, when we remember how Australians have repeatedly helped Europe. Today I feel we do not need your armies, but the world needs you to keep saying "no".

Your unions have said "no" to the movement of uranium; your city councillors said "no" to the carrier Invincible; your citizens must keep saying "no" to nuclear reactors and weapons.

Our unions are following your lead. Firemen and ambulance drivers are saying "no" to taking part in futile civil defence practices. Railway men are refusing to move nuclear waste through the centre of our cities and when seamen refused to dump it in the Atlantic, the army had to be ordered to do it instead. Doctors against the Bomb are stating bluntly that there is no credible medical response to even a single nuclear explosion and our Greenham women are saying "no" in their way, too. Their spontaneous courage and determination shows, like the massive peace rally in Sydney, that we ordinary people are not as powerless as it first appears.

My photograph of your nuclear-free zone is a token I can take to Greenham to give them fresh heart.

Jennifer E Evans  
Yarborough Road  
SOUTHSEA PORTSMOUTH  
ENGLAND

April 25

Letter: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 1984.