20 February 2025

Right time for U-turn on uranium mining in Western Australia

New polling released today shows the majority of West Australians support lifting the ban on uranium mining. The poll conducted by Painted Dog Research and commissioned by the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies (AMEC) featured 806 respondents 18+, across metropolitan and regional WA.

In response to the question *'Would you like to see the current ban on uranium mining, implemented in 2017 in WA, lifted?'* - 57 per cent of respondents answered 'Yes'. This figure is up from a previous industry poll in 2023 that found 49 per cent supported uranium mining.

"What this poll demonstrates, is that West Australians can see the value in uranium mining for our economy and our state.

"It also points to a community understanding that WA is a mining state, with the professionalism and skill to deal with uranium mining in a safe and responsible way.

"Quite frankly, it's time for WA Labor to reconsider the current ban and move with the times," said AMEC Chief Executive Officer Mr Warren Pearce.

With strong global demand for uranium, fuelled in large part by the global push for decarbonised energy and emissions reduction, the current policy position, from eight years ago, no longer makes any sense.

When respondents were asked *'Do you support uranium mining as a way of reducing the world's carbon emissions?'* - 58 per cent said 'Yes', with only 15 per cent having little or no support for it.

AMEC is calling on WA Labor, to let voters know before the March 8 election, if they are willing to consider overturning the ban, if re-elected.

On the stats alone, Australia has 1.68 million tonnes of uranium resources. Double that of Kazakhstan (815,200 tonnes) and Canada (588,500 tonnes).

But when it comes to production, the roles are reversed and Australia sits fourth on the pecking order, producing a lowly 4,553 tonnes in 2022, well behind Kazakhstan (21,227 tonnes or 43% in the world) and Canada (7,351 tonnes).*

Mr Pearce said, "WA has the potential to be the eighth largest uranium source in the world.

"It would create more jobs, attract investment, diversify the economy from iron ore and gold, and create a new billion dollar commodity export market.

"With job losses in the nickel and lithium sectors over the past 12 to 18 months, now is the perfect time to throw out the ban and look to add a new commodity to our mining mix.

"WA can be a global leader in uranium exports."

With the growing sentiment in the WA community, an AUKUS agreement for nuclear submarines on our doorstop, and strong global demand showing no sign of abating, now is the time to challenge the current ban.

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The WA mining industry has the strong policy, regulatory and environmental frameworks already in place, which are more than capable of ensuring uranium mining is done safely.

Another question that formed part of the poll was *'Did you know that uranium has been mined safely in Australia for over 50 years?'* Answering 'Yes' were 54 per cent of West Australians.

With 46 per cent of respondents answering 'No' and showing they were unaware that uranium mining has been happening safely in Australia for over 50 years, it points to the need for further education.

"It's clear that WA minds have come around on mining uranium. With more education about how Australia has safely mined uranium for over 50 years, those numbers will continue to climb.

"We're calling on the Premier to leave the politics of the past behind and embrace the opportunity for Western Australia. More and more West Australians expect him too.

"Let's face it, if you support nuclear submarines, you support uranium mining. Anything else, is just blatant hypocrisy," Mr Pearce added.

* Source: World Nuclear Association, https://worldnuclear.org/information-library/nuclear-fuel-cycle/mining-of-uranium/worlduranium-mining-production.aspx

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