



Australian Nuclear Free Alliance 2009 Meeting Statement



The Australian Nuclear Free Alliance (ANFA) met on Nukunu country in Quorn, South Australia, on the weekend of September 5th-6th to take part in our annual national gathering of Aboriginal people and NGOs, focussing on grassroots resistance to the nuclear industry in Australia.

Over the past twelve years ANFA has brought together Aboriginal people living with, or threatened by, nuclear projects and uranium mining on their country, along with representatives from environment and public health organisations who are actively opposing the industry.

The ANFA committee is driven by Aboriginal voices and strengthened by community input. ANFA is a forum where our voices are truly heard and respected, and where we are empowered through a genuinely supportive meeting process. A new committee was elected at the gathering, with broad national representation, including for the first time Aboriginal representatives from WA and Qld.

At this years gathering Traditional Owners learnt there are many Aboriginal people who share similar concerns about aspects of Native Title, especially in regards to uranium mining. Attendees demonstrated a clear opposition to new mines in the SA & NT, and are united in our stance against any attempt to impose a radioactive waste dump in the NT.

All participants expressed anger and disappointment with federal Environment Minister Peter Garrett, who recently approved another uranium mine, Beverley Four Mile, in SA, and the expansion of the Ranger uranium mine in Kakadu, NT. Participants stated strongly that they do not want this poison (uranium) going overseas to contaminate other countries and communities via nuclear weapons, power stations/reactors or radioactive waste stockpiles.

ANFA members totally reject the misguided notion that nuclear power is an answer to climate change, due to : the enormous amounts of fossil fuels and clean water required to mine and process uranium, unresolved issues of ground water contamination, increased transportation of radioactive materials and radioactive waste management - including highly toxic tailings dams that will remain for millenia, polluting the local environment long after the companies have gone.

An affiliated cultural group from South Australia said:

“Leave the poisons in the ground, no mining expansions anywhere”, Eileen Wingfield. (ANFA Honorary President).

“Buthao Weir. Munda Yamadoo Iliga” – (No poisons. Leave the land/ground as it is), Marsena Coleman-Richards.

“Leave our land clean and poison free, for our children, generation to generation”. Sue Haseldine (ANFA committee member).

Traditional Owners & Bloodline Custodians from South Australia said:

“The awi (water) is a precious and sacred part of our culture and we know it must be protected and kept clean for all Australians and their future generations” said Adnyamathanha Elder Enice Marsh.

“The creek beds and waterways are being carved up by exploration drill holes. Our land is being raped by mining companies and we feel powerless to stop it because the governments are not taking care of the land like they should be. What good is environmental legislation if the government does not use it to protect our lands and waters” said Native Title Applicant Thathy Anderson.

Some of the impacts, from uranium mining and radioactive tailings dams, on people and country have never been documented or published, however, Aboriginal people on the ground have , past and present, witnessed the impacts first hand.

“We have seen Kangaroo’s going blind, and birds with white sores on their legs”, Geraldine Anderson.



Image: NT representatives at ANFA 2009

Traditional Owners and Bloodline Custodians from Western Australia said:

“Uranium mining has not happened in WA but there is a lot of talk that it could. We are concerned about this and have traveled across to Nukunu country, Southern Flinders Ranges in South Australia. We have listened to people who have been living with uranium mining on their lands. We are representatives of the Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation (Port Hedland), the Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (Carnarvon region), Wangatha People and the Noongar Nations. After hearing their stories we understand the devastating impact of uranium mining on country, culture and families who have been affected from generation to generation. Affecting the spirit of the land affects the spirit of our people. As land protectors we do not want our country to get sick, and will work together to keep it, and us strong.”

Traditional Owners & Bloodline Custodians from Northern Territory said:

“Since campaigning against the Intervention, I have come to learn about uranium mining and the waste dump issues in the NT. Today people are playing a numbers game and the only way we can fight is we get the people power and that’s what I am working towards because its all about human rights for everyone, everywhere”. Barbara Shaw (Mt Nancy Camp, Alice Springs).

“The uranium industry has way too much support from both sides of federal politics, the pro-nuclear lobby is very powerful in this country. Many generous concessions have been granted to large companies - such as free access and use of literally billions of litres of clean Artesian waters – (ie BHP Billiton’s Olympic Dam - SA water indenture act) enabling the rapid expansion of existing mines, or the creation of new ones, often against the wishes of bona fide TOs. ANFA is the only national anti-nuclear forum, that listens to the voices of our people, we work hard, for no money, to get the word out to the wider community.” Donna Jackson (re elected ANFA co-chair, 2009).

“I speak up on behalf of my brother and that’s one of the proposed waste dump areas and the sad thing about it is he has a little tourism business and that’s our hunting ground, we go out there every weekend to get bush medicine, bush tucker and kangaroos and I am also fighting against the (Northern Territory Emergency Response) Intervention. All that area, its all under the Intervention. So I am fighting two wars at the moment, its making it really hard for us”. Audrey McCormack (Alice Springs).

This year’s gathering was attended by the following Aboriginal nations and NGOs:

Anmatjere (Central NT)
Arrernte (Central NT)
Darumbal Nation (Central Queensland)
Kaytetye (Central NT)
Kokatha Mula (SA)
Kokatha (SA)
Larrakia Nation (Darwin NT)
Noongar Nations (WA)
Nukunu (SA)
Wangatha People (WA)
Warlpiri (Central NT)
Warumungu (Central NT)
Yamatji Marlpa Aboriginal Corporation (Carnarvon region, WA)
Yamatji Marlpa Barna Baba Maaja Aboriginal Corporation (Port Hedland, WA)

Anti Nuclear Alliance of Western Australia
Arid Lands Environment Centre
Australian Conservation Foundation
Australian Student Environment Network
Ban Uranium Mining Permanently campaign
Beyond Nuclear Initiative
Conservation Council of Western Australia
Environment Centre NT
Friends of the Earth Australia
Mineral Policy Institute
Top End Aboriginal Conservation Alliance
West Mallee Protection

Australian Nuclear Free Alliance
c/o Friends of the Earth (FoE) - PO Box 222, Fitzroy, VIC, 3065
www.anfa.org.au