



MEDIA RELEASE

MINERALS COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA

Time to end discrimination against uranium in EPBC Act

Statement from Daniel Zavattiero, Executive Director – Uranium

Australia is missing out on jobs, investment and regional prosperity because of unfair and discriminatory treatment of uranium mining projects in the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act.

New [analysis](#) released today by environmental assessment expert Lachlan Wilkinson recommends the Act be reformed to streamline environmental approval of uranium projects while retaining environmental protection.

The analysis explores two issues linked to uranium mining: radiation safety and nuclear proliferation. It found that radiation safety is not unique to uranium and is comprehensively assessed and regulated by state bodies, with further federal review adding cost for no added benefit. And proliferation concerns are dealt with by other legislation and treaties.

With the second statutory 10-year review of the EPBC Act due next year, it's time to end the Act's discrimination against uranium which is adding unnecessary delay and cost to uranium projects and handicapping Australia's world-class uranium industry.

Under the EPBC Act, two mines with identical impacts are treated differently merely because of the commodity that is being mined.

Australia can reform its treatment of uranium under the EPBC Act – which requires that all uranium projects obtain federal environmental approval, regardless of size or impact – without any additional environmental cost and allow the industry to prosper and create more jobs at home, while producing fuel for zero emissions power generation abroad.

Australia has almost a third of the world's uranium – the largest share of any nation – yet produces just 10 per cent of world production. We are missing out on future investment, jobs and exports while countries like Kazakhstan and Canada exploit continued expansion in the global nuclear industry.

With more countries looking for reliable, affordable and low emissions power, nuclear power generation is projected by the International Energy Agency's Sustainable Development Scenario to more than double by 2040.

This is a sector where technology is evolving rapidly, including the development of Small Modular Reactors boosted by new designs such as NuScale which is moving towards regulatory approval in the United States. This offers a potential new growth market for uranium worldwide in addition to large plants currently planned and under construction.

No federal environmental conditions in relation to the uranium projects approved to date have related to uranium-specific issues that were not already covered by the state approval process.

The EPBC Act should be amended to remove the handicap on our world-class uranium producers, developers and explorers who want a greater share of growing global demand.

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