

PNFA FACT SHEET

NUCLEAR POWER IS COST PROHIBITIVE

- The true economies of the nuclear industry are never fully accounted for.

The enormous expense of constructing a nuclear reactor - double the capital cost of a conventional coal plant – means private investors including Wall Street and Standard and Poors are less than enthusiastic.

The economic costs associated with nuclear power include mining the uranium, milling the extracted ore, remediating the tailings, enriching the uranium, fabricating it into fuel rods, constructing the nuclear reactor, decommissioning or dismantling it after 25 to 30 years of operation, and building the containers and repository to store the radioactive waste.

The cost of decommissioning all the existing US nuclear reactors is estimated to be \$US33billion. These costs - plus the enormous expense involved in the transport and storage of radioactive waste for half a million years - are not now included in the economic assessments of the nuclear electricity.

- At present there are 442 nuclear reactors in operation around the world
- The global nuclear industry claims that, without cost overruns and delays in construction, nuclear power is 50% more expensive to generate than coal-generated power, 6 vs 4 cents per kilowatt hour. But the industry fails to include all the costs just mentioned.

The Howard government's review on uranium mining and nuclear power states that 'nuclear power in Australia would be 20 to 50% more expensive than conventional power from coal and gas-fired plants, and therefore would only be cost competitive if a tax was imposed on carbon'. But as the nuclear fuel chain is heavily dependent on fossil fuel these carbon taxes would also be added to the cost of nuclear power.

- Nuclear power has always been dependent upon government subsidies at every level. Because nuclear power was an offshoot of the nuclear weapons industry it is a beneficiary of the intensive government-funded research committed to nuclear weapons development during the Cold War. In the US, property, home and personal insurance against catastrophic nuclear accidents is covered by the government, and 2 years ago the US energy bill allocated \$13 billion to aid construction of 5 reactors with another \$50 billion in aid before the congress in 2007.

Should a catastrophic meltdown occur in the United States or any other part of the world, those investing millions of dollars in this technology will lose all. Such an event would signal the end of nuclear power forever.