



Treaties Committee clears way for Australian uranium to be sold to China

The Treaties Committee has cleared the way for Australian uranium to be sold to China. China is planning to quadruple its nuclear energy output by 2020 and requires imported uranium to achieve this.

Report 81 tabled in Federal Parliament today recommends Australia ratify two agreements between Australia and the People's Republic of China to allow for the transfer and safeguard of nuclear material and technology.

The nuclear material transfer agreement would allow for the supply of Australian uranium to China's nuclear power program. The nuclear cooperation agreement provides for cooperation in various nuclear areas; including the transfer of nuclear-related material, equipment and technology. Together, the Agreements include safeguards on the use of Australian uranium and have the same effect as provisions contained in Australia's other nuclear safeguards agreements. The safeguards provisions in the Agreements ensure that Australian uranium can be used only for non-military purposes.

Report 81 makes seven recommendations. These recommendations include: the ratification of the treaties; increasing Australia's monetary contribution to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Australian Safeguards and Non-Proliferation Office to improve the safeguards system; lobbying the IAEA for mandatory safeguarding of conversion facilities located in the five declared nuclear weapons states under the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*; and continuing dialogue with the Chinese Government about governance and transparency issues.

"The Agreements allow Australia's uranium industry to expand its export market while helping China to meet its future energy requirements. The Agreements also strengthen the Australia-China relationship and foster continued dialogue with China on nuclear related issues," Committee Chair Dr Andrew Southcott said.

"The Committee has made its recommendations in a bipartisan way. Importantly, among the recommendations, the Committee believes that a boost to the IAEA's verification budget will ensure a more robust international safeguards system," Dr Southcott added.

Report 81 is available on the Committee's website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/report.htm> or by contacting the Committee Secretariat on (02) 6277 4002. Copies of the report will also be available at the press conference, which will be **webcast live** on <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>.

Press Conference for Report 81

Date: **Wednesday, 6 December 2006**

Time: **12.00 pm**

Venue: **Committee Room 2R1, Parliament House, Canberra**

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