



URANIUM

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE, UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA Resolution 85.158

85.158 It was resolved

- (1) To recognise that the issue of uranium mining has serious implications for many areas of Australian life, including health, energy needs, work, economic growth, long term international trade, and involvement in the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and should not be dealt with in a simplistic way.
- (2) That there are certain factors which the church must take seriously in reaching a decision on this issue:
 - (a) the inability of the Non-Proliferation Treaty to provide any real safeguard against the use of Australian uranium in the production nuclear weapons – the mining and export of Australian uranium contributes to the arms race;
 - (b) the problem of waste disposal has not yet been solved, leaving ever-increasing dangers to the environment;
 - (c) there are dangers to personal freedom and access to information caused by the need to guard against terrorism or theft of nuclear material;
 - (d) the present nuclear technology involves profound risks and a legacy of unsolved problems in return for a relatively small, short term gain in energy resources;
 - (e) nuclear energy is of little use to the needs of ordinary people in developing countries, but is most often used to power factories owned by local elites or large multinational companies;
 - (f) there is growing evidence that nuclear energy production is neither cheap, reliable or safe;
 - (g) while there is employment and economic gain from uranium mining these are often not as great as is suggested and must be set off against the long term economic and social costs involved.
- (3) To declare the belief of the Assembly Standing Committee that, while these issues remain, Australia should declare a moratorium on the mining and export of uranium.
- (4) To ask the Commission on Social Responsibility to propose to the Commission for Mission as soon as possible a process whereby a moratorium could be implemented.