

Uranium Mining in the Northern Territory

- Unlike the States, ownership of uranium where it occurs in the Northern Territory belongs to the Commonwealth under the *Atomic Energy Act 1953*.
- What happens in the States?
- South Australia is currently the only State with operating uranium mines.
- The South Australian Government can issue mining licenses for uranium under their *Mining Act 1971* where: *An authorisation to carry out mining operations for the recovery of a radioactive mineral may be granted by the (State) Minister. (S.10A (2))*
- In the Northern Territory, the Ranger Mine operates under a Commonwealth authority to mine. The former Nabarlek Mine's lease was granted in 1980 following the introduction of self government, and operated under a special mining lease under the *Northern Territory Mining Act*.
- New uranium mines would operate under Northern Territory mining legislation. But in the development and approval of a new uranium mine, the Northern Territory must act on the advice of the Commonwealth when setting the terms and conditions of a uranium mineral lease.
- Uranium mined in Australia is not used to make nuclear weapons. Australia sells only to countries where there are arrangements in place, including verifiable international agreements, to ensure that it is used only for peaceful purposes. International supervision and auditing of material is routine.
- Australia does not have any nuclear power plants. It does, however, have a research reactor at Lucas Heights in Sydney, which is used to produce radioisotopes for medicine, agriculture and industry.
- Control of exploration and mining for any other mineral is controlled by the Northern Territory Government through the *Mining and Mining Management Acts*.
- Who would control ownership of uranium and its mining in the Northern Territory? Upon the grant of Statehood, would Territorians want the Territory to control uranium mining or leave it to the Commonwealth to own and make decisions about?

Tell us what you think. Log onto www.statehood.nt.gov.au and have your say.

