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Monitored this issue:

Resisting radioactive racism in Australia

Jim Green

The 2023 annual meeting of the Australian Nuclear Free Alliance

Australian governments and industry have a sorry history of disrespecting the rights and interests of Aboriginal people in order to advance nuclear projects. This history dates from the British atomic bomb tests in the 1950s and '60s, and scandal-plagued 'clean-ups' of contaminated test sites in subsequent decades. Racism has also been a constant companion of the uranium mining industry. For the past 30 years, successive governments have attempted to override opposition from Aboriginal communities to impose nuclear waste dumps. And since 2021, federal and state government have passed legislation disempowering Aboriginal people in order to advance the AUKUS nuclear submarine project.

Governments and industry deploy any number of tactics to dispossess and disempower Aboriginal people including ignoring their concerns; divide-and-rule tactics; radioactive ransom or bribery; 'humbugging' (exerting persistent, unwanted pressure); providing Aboriginal people with false information; threats, including legal threats; and stripping Aboriginal people of whatever feeble rights they enjoy under law.

There's a long history of radioactive racism in Australia – and an equally long history of resistance. Aboriginal people and their allies have fought long and hard for the decontamination of atomic bomb test sites, for victim compensation, and for access to land previously off-limits.

A remarkable chapter of the history of resistance to radioactive racism has involved successful campaigns to prevent the imposition of unwanted nuclear waste dumps. Four attempts to impose a national nuclear waste dump have been defeated by Aboriginal-led

campaigns, and an attempt to establish an international nuclear waste import industry in South Australia was also defeated by an Aboriginal-led campaign.

Mirarr Traditional Owners in the Northern Territory have fought long and hard to protect country and culture from the uranium industry. The Ranger uranium mine was closed in 2021 and a rehabilitation of the mine site is underway. A Mirarr-led national mass movement prevented the mining of Jabiluka around the turn of the century. Areva's plan to mine uranium at Koongarra was defeated by Djok Traditional Owners. Aboriginal and broader community opposition has stopped several uranium mine proposals in Western Australia. As of May 2026, only three uranium mines are operating, all of them in South Australia: Olympic Dam, Beverley and Honeymoon.

Legal challenges have sometimes been used to challenge and delay nuclear and uranium projects. Examples include:
* the successful Federal Court challenge in 2003 by the South Australian government and a native title claimant against the federal government's acquisition of land for a national nuclear waste dump;
* a legal challenge against the nomination of a site in the Northern Territory for a national radioactive waste repository (the nomination was withdrawn in 2014, before the court case had concluded); and
* the Barngarla Traditional Owners' successful Federal Court appeal in 2023 quashing the nomination of a site in South Australia selected for a national nuclear waste dump.

Legal challenges have a place in resistance against nuclear and uranium projects, but community resistance outside of the legal system has been a more important and successful strategy. Case studies reveal a common pattern involving determined resistance by Aboriginal people, supported by civil society allies including environment groups, trade unions, church groups, public health groups and others.

UN Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples

As well as fighting specific nuclear and uranium projects, Aboriginal people and their allies are working to enshrine the principle of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC) in legislation and to enshrine the principles outlined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) in legislation. Article 29 of the UNDRIP states: "States shall take effective measures to ensure that no storage or disposal of hazardous materials shall take place in the lands or territories of indigenous peoples without their free, prior and informed consent."

If FPIC / UNDRIP principles can be enshrined in legislation, the patterns of radioactive racism will be severely curtailed.

Efforts to enshrine FPIC / UNDRIP principles in legislation were given a boost by Dr. Marcos Orellana, the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and Toxics, who visited Australia in 2023. The final report of the Special Rapporteur stated:
"Indigenous Peoples have suffered grave maltreatment from radiation exposure due to nuclear testing, spraying of highly hazardous pesticides, uranium and other mining, and industrial activities with toxic impacts. The proposed siting of radioactive wastes on the lands of Indigenous Peoples illustrates the lack of respect for rights contemplated in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples."

The Special Rapporteur's recommendations included the following:
"(a) Amend the National Radioactive Waste Management Act to explicitly reflect the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the right of free, prior and informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples;
(b) Provide adequate compensation and assistance to those affected by radiation exposure from nuclear testing, particularly Indigenous Peoples;
(c) Provide further assistance to affected communities and further environmental remediation in relation to the atomic tests conducted by the British Government on Australian territory."

Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, in its November 2023 report on the Inquiry into the UNDRIP in Australia, recommended that the federal government ensure its approach to developing legislation and policy should be consistent with the UNDRIP and that a National Action Plan should be developed to implement, and assess compliance with, the UNDRIP. The Committee further recommended that the Human Rights (Parliamentary Scrutiny) Act 2011 should be amended to include the UNDRIP in the definition of 'human rights' so that it be formally considered when scrutinising legislation.

But the federal Labor government never responded to the Committee's report, and has not adopted its recommendations. Efforts to enshrine FPIC / UNDRIP principles in legislation have a long way to go, but momentum is building. Those calling for FPIC / UNDRIP legislation (and for adherence to FPIC principles more generally) include the Aboriginal-led Australian Nuclear Free Alliance, Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation, the Nuclear Truth Project, and, among many others, a small number of progressive politicians such as Senator Lidia Thorpe and the Australian Greens.

Free, prior and informed consent

A 2024 paper by Australians for Native Title and Reconciliation (ANTAR) summarises developments in recent years:
"As of 2024, Australian law does not require corporations or others proposing projects on First Nations lands and waters to secure FPIC in accordance with the requirements of UNDRIP, despite the fact that Australia endorsed the Declaration in 2009. Still, there is an increasingly palpable expectation that First Nations Peoples are given a seat at the decision making table regarding laws, activities and projects that affect them.
"Partly this can be understood as a product of the 2023 Voice Referendum, which brought the issue of participatory decision making through a First Nations representative body into greater public consciousness. It is also a result of the destruction of Juukan Gorge in which a Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura sacred rock shelter containing a cultural sequence spanning over 40,000 years was legally blasted by mining company Rio Tinto in 2020. The devastation to First Nations cultural heritage sparked national and international outrage, as well as a Senate Inquiry which referred to FPIC as "a crucial principle that must be enshrined within Australian Aboriginal cultural heritage legislation and related practices".
"Increasingly, non-resource companies and industries are also considering FPIC as part of their business practices. Both the Australian Council of Superannuation Investors ACSI and the Responsible Investment Association of Australasia have issued individual directives on interacting with First Nations communities, outlining the anticipation for companies to pledge to uphold the rights and cultural heritage of First Nations peoples in line with the United

Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and UNDRIP. The Australian Sustainable Finance Institute, comprising major financial institutions, investors, and insurers, has also advised financial entities to integrate FPIC into their decision-making processes, including to reassess investments in projects or endeavours where this standard cannot be met.
"In October 2021, the Australian Heritage Council published a policy statement on FPIC, which defines important concepts with respect to FPIC and outlines how the Council will work with First Nations Peoples, including through sustained and meaningful engagement. …
"Numerous inquiries (such as the aforementioned Inquiry into Juukan Gorge) and proposed regulatory changes have explored ways to enhance protection for First Nations peoples and effectively integrate FPIC into Australian legislation. …
"In August 2022, Senator Lidia Thorpe re-introduced the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Bill 2022. The Senate referred the Bill to the Joint Standing Committee on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs to consider options to improve Australia's adherence to the principles of UNDRIP, including FPIC.
"In November 2023, the Committee released its final report. In her additional commentary on the recommendations, Senator Lidia Thorpe acknowledged FPIC as a core principle of UNDRIP while also stating that FPIC is one of UNDRIP's most disregarded principles.
"Several submissions made by native title bodies and Traditional Owners during the Inquiry suggested that the lack of appropriate processes for FPIC were at the heart of the problems with heritage and environmental protection laws. …
"Similarly, the National Native Title Council argued in their submission that the requirement of FPIC 'should be central to all native title agreements and negotiations and needs to be legislated into the [Native Title Act] and other related legislations.'"

Unfortunately, a significant roadblock to ending patterns of radioactive racism, and enshrining FPIC / UNDRIP principles in legislation, is the AUKUS nuclear submarine project pursued by successive governments since 2021. The AUKUS project is being pursued with no regard to the rights and interests of affected Aboriginal people. The federal Labor government has secured passage of legislation through parliament allowing it to impose any AUKUS-related facilities – including nuclear waste stores and dumps – on Aboriginal land without consultation or consent. State laws providing feeble Aboriginal heritage protections and land rights are overridden by new federal laws.

For the most part, governments and industry are happy to try to dispossess and disempower Aboriginal people in the pursuit of civil nuclear and uranium projects … and even more so for a military project such as AUKUS.

Dr. Jim Green is the national nuclear campaigner with Friends of the Earth Australia and a member of the Nuclear Consulting Group.

Closing Spanish nuclear power plant cheaper than continuing operation, report shows

Jan van Evert

The Almaraz Nuclear Power Plant (Wikipedia)

A report published by Greenpeace Spain has shown that it is cheaper to shut down the Almaraz nuclear power plant than to continue its operation. The results show that the planned closure of Almaraz is also technically feasible and environmentally sound.

The nuclear power plant in Almaraz, about 200 kilometres west from Madrid, consists of two 1000 MW reactors and has been in operation since 1983. Spain has in total seven nuclear reactors that were all built in the eighties. They represent almost twenty percent of the total Spanish electricity production. In 2019 an agreement was signed to shut down all nuclear reactors in Spain between 2027 and 2035. In October 2025 the owners of the Almaraz plant have applied for an extension of the operation until 2030, so that both reactors can be shut down simultaneously. This is longer than the originally planned lifespan of forty years for the reactors.

The Greenpeace report has shown that there is no evidence of a structural dependence on gas associated with the closure under the terms currently agreed. Moreover, the extension of Almaraz would significantly delay the introduction of new renewables and storage capacity.

Furthermore, the closure of Almaraz makes it possible to reduce the 3,8 TW of renewable energy that is lost previously. That is approximately half the annual electricity generation of a nuclear reactor in Spain. The analysis by Greenpeace is based on detailed hourly simulations.

The extension of Almaraz will lead to a temporary reduction in gas consumption between 2028 and 2030, but will result in a system that is structurally less renewable from 2030 onwards. This will result in higher CO_2 emissions. The extension also provides temporary relief both in the average price of electricity and in electricity bills between 2028 and 2030, but from 2031 onwards it will lead to a sustained increase in both metrics.

An analysis of recent reports published by other organisations supports these conclusions.

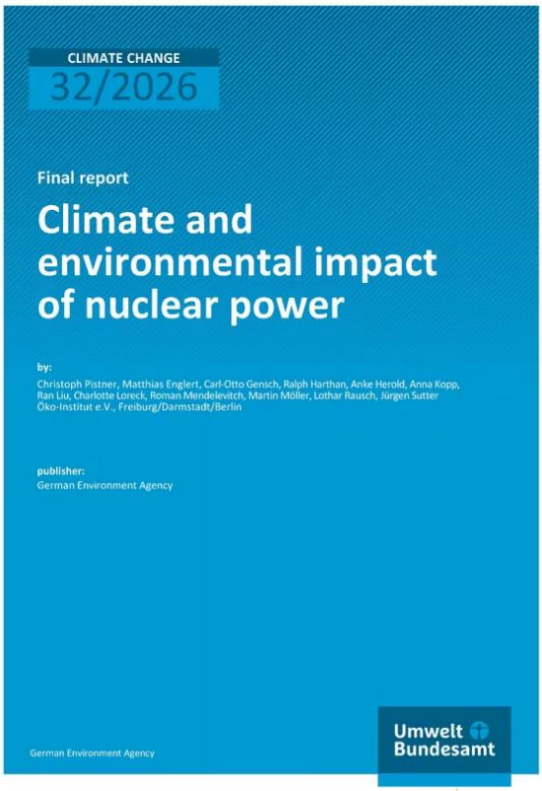
Where the extension of the Almaraz plant offers minor temporary economic and climate benefits in the period 2028–2029, but net negative effects of a greater magnitude from 2030 onwards.

To read the full report (Spanish only) https://es.greenpeace.org/es/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2026/02/Informe-cierre-Almaraz-pag.pdf

Climate and environmental impact of nuclear power

Report performed by Öko-Institut e.V.

In a new report published by the German Umweltbundesamt (UBA) , the role of nuclear energy in the transformation to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 is assessed.



The study examines the role of nuclear energy for achieving climate targets in five different integrated assessment models and compares them with a comprehensive bottom-up analysis of countries' plans and programs for nuclear power until 2050.

Next is a comprehensive life cycle assessment of nuclear power with a focus on the greenhouse gas emmissions. Different life-cycle chains are covering different countries and regions for the baseline year 2020 and a projection year 2030.

The study adds a brief discussion of environmental impacts due to severe accidents

in nuclear power plants and the proliferation risks inherent in the nuclear fuel cycle.

Finally, the report provides an assessment of the life cycle costs of electricity from new nuclear power plants and resulting greenhouse gas abatement costs with respect to hard coal, comparing them with those of renewable energies.

The results show that the development of renewable energies is the key to achieving the net-zero targets. Nuclear energy, on the other hand, is not necessary for achieving the climate targets and its significance for electricity generation in 2050 is very limited in any case. Despite the greenhouse gas emissions of nuclear energy, which are at a comparably low level to those of renewable energies, it is not a quick or cost-effective option for significantly reducing the energy system's greenhouse gas emissions due to long construction times and high costs.

To read the full report:
https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/climate-environmental-impact-of-nuclear-power

To read the short version
https://www.umweltbundesamt.de/system/files/medien/11850/publikationen/2026-05/32_2026_Climate_Short_Version.pdf

New benchmark shows: renewables over fifty percent cheaper than nuclear

Jan van Evert

Picture https://renewables.az/

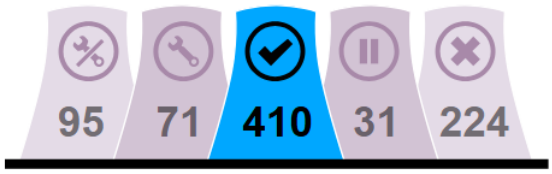
A new study by the Aalborg University in Denmark has shown that solar and wind power are 53 percent cheaper than nuclear power if the cost of integrating that technology into the wider energy system are included in the calculations. The system-based levelized cost of energy (SLCOE) is an alternative to the standard LCOE benchmark. LCOE only measures the cost of producing a unit of electricity from a given technology. The study models Denmark's current electricity-only grid and a future climate-neutral energy system with full sector coupling, using the EnergyPLAN model. In a future climate-neutral integrated system, which is the central comparison of the study, nuclear's SLCOE is approximately €100/MWh. The least-cost mix of offshore wind and solar power is approximately €46/MWh.

Professor Christian Breyer, one of the authors of the study, explains that the driver of the low costs for renewables is sector coupling. This provides thermal storage, hydrogen storage via electrolysis, flexible heat pump operation, and electric vehicle smart charging. The analysis tests four cost assumption sets. Under all scenarios in the future integrated system, solar and wind power outperform nuclear power on SLCOE. For countries where wind resources are limited such as the Middle East and India, Breyer pointed to external literature indicating that batteries and flexible demand are the most important integration tools.

The study excludes the cost of nuclear waste storage and the opportunity cost of foregone renewable deployment during the construction of a nuclear power plant. This construction lasts on average fifteen years. If these two factors had been included the cost difference between renewables and nuclear power would have been even larger. And another important cost factor, the demolition cost of nuclear power plants, isn't included either.

Source: https://www.pv-magazine.com/2026/04/17/new-metric-shows-renewables-are-53-cheaper-than-nuclear-power/

World Nuclear Power Status



Number of Reactors
(as of May 2026)

Anti-nuclear group take on Sellafield for the second time in legal row

An anti-nuclear group has successfully raised £20,000 for legal fees to take on Sellafield and the Environment Agency (EA) for a second time. The Lakes Against Nuclear Dump (LAND)[1] group

previously failed a High Court attempt for a judicial review into the EA decision to award Sellafield a licence to extract water from the decommissioning site in Lancashire. After the failed attempt in 2025, the new funds will look to overturn the development of a new radioactive waste storage facility. Its leader, Marriane Birkby, fears the construction of a tunnel underground as part of the work will lead to the discharge of contaminated water into the River Ehen and River Calder, respectively. Sellafield plans to pump water taken from the construction site to on-site storage tanks for testing prior to being discharged directly into the sea. It has no plans to discharge into either River Ehen or Calder.

Energy Voice 27th May 2026; To read more: https://www.energyvoice.com/renewables-energy-transition/nuclear/598287/anti-nuclear-group-take-on-sellafield-for-the-second-time-in-legal-row/

[1] Lakes Against Nuclear Dump (LAND) is a prominent anti-radiation and environmental campaign group based in Cumbria, England. Led by activist Marianne Birkby, the group operates alongside the broader Radiation Free Lakeland collective. LAND primarily campaigns against the development of nuclear waste facilities and the perceived environmental threats posed by the Sellafield nuclear site to the surrounding Lake District ecosystems. Read more about Radiation Free Lakeland https://substack.com/@radiationfreelakeland

Kenyan communities protest planned nuclear plant near Lake Victoria

Residents of Sakwa in Bondo gather during a protest against the proposed nuclear power plant /Handout (the-star.co.ke)

On May 21, residents of Sakwa, in southeastern Kenya, gathered to protest the government's plan to install a nuclear power plant near their homes, along Lake Victoria.

https://news.mongabay.com/short-article/2026/05/kenyan-communities-protest-planned-nuclear-plant-near-lake-victoria/

French Senate adopts bill recognizing victims of nuclear tests

By Jacques Paquier - Sénat-4, CC BY 2.0, https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=79425938

France's Senate unanimously adopted a bill Thursday formally recognizing victims of French nuclear tests in French Polynesia and improving access to compensation for those exposed to radiation during decades of testing.
https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/french-senate-adopts-bill-recognizing-victims-of-nuclear-tests/3950687

Drone hits UAE nuclear power plant

Jan van Evert

Picture: NDTV World

A drone strike sparked a fire on the edge of the United Arab Emirates' Barakah nuclear power plant on Sunday May 17th. The UAE Defense Ministry said three drones came over its western border with Saudi Arabia, two others were intercepted. Bakarah is the only nuclear power plant in the Arab world and consist of four reactors of 1350 MW. It can provide a quarter of the electric energy needs in the UAE. The International Atomic Energy Agency said the strike caused a fire in an electrical generator and one reactor was being powered by emergency diesel generators. The IAEA has been informed by the UAE that off-site power was restored to unit 3 of the Barakah plant the next day.

Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, whom the UAE has battled as part of a Saudi-led coalition, claimed to have targeted the plant while it was under construction in 2017, which the UAE denies.