

POLITICAL FEAR OF URANIUM NO MORE

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The historic political fear in **Australia** of the **uranium** industry is no longer justifiable, with public sentiment now more embracing of the industry than ever, according to the sector's peak industry lobby.

In a wide-ranging address to the **Paydirt uranium conference**, **Australian Uranium Assoc** CEO Michael Angwin also urged domestic uranium production policies be aligned with international trade and diplomatic imperatives, and that the regulatory/approvals process for new Australian mines be reformed.

"There is no point signing international treaties if in fact domestic uranium policies hamper Australia actually fulfilling its treaty obligations. And while we need to align these policies, we should use that impetus to also reform the overweight regulation/ approvals process for new mines."

Mr Angwin said Australians no longer fear uranium, a sector that is operated in a best practice regulatory framework that has proven its ability to satisfy the most rigorous environmental assessments.

"Australian opinion on uranium mining shows a halving in opposition to it in the past 6 years, with only a small impact from Fukushima, with new support coming from the realisation of its jobs, export and clean energy credentials.

"In that time, we have also seen the Federal Govt say yes 4 times to uranium projects – the Beverley expansion, Four Mile, the Olympic Dam expansion (in South Australia) and **Toro's** new Wiluna mine in Western Australia – which is telling in how uranium has met and is meeting rigorous politically-backed environmental assessment.

"Thirty years of monitoring at Roxby Downs and the Olympic Dam village has also demonstrated convincingly that fears of excessive radiation are not borne out by credible data, which shows effective radiation doses to the public at those 2 sites are below detection limits for all of those 2 decades."

Angwin also put paid to public misperceptions over radiation incidents, pointing out that throughout 2009, 2010 and 2011, there had not been a singular reportable radiation incident at any Australian uranium mine, yet there had been more than 100 such incidents each year in the areas of diagnostic radiology, nuclear medicine and radiotherapy. Statistically, more than 11,000 containers of uranium concentrate have been transported in Australia with no incidents affecting public health.

Angwin said the biggest political impediment remained the extraordinary measures required by gov't in assessing uranium projects. "We have a track record now in the Australian uranium industry which justifies uranium being treated the same as other mining projects.

"There is a case for better ports access, a removal of duplication between state and federal gov'ts in the assessment processes and some reform is needed for the EPBC act.

"In short, we have entered the political end-game for uranium and any remnant political fears about the industry cannot be justified against the sector's 40 year track record," he said.