

What to do for Australia's long term energy requirements? The race to replace coal.

On this topic it should be mentioned that "One Nation" is a keen supporter of clean coal and scrubber technologies. We are however opposed to some of the current mining methods of which are doing more to harm the environment and health of those in the area than the power stations that burn that coal ever could, even without the clean coal burning technology. However, there are other forms of power generation of which we should consider. Firstly, atomic power is being foisted upon us as the only real option. One Nation does not believe that Australia need go nuclear for its main source of power production. We should though at least have a small number of reactors and lead the world in research and development of that technology. We remain opposed to the large scale sale of Uranium to some of our customers; of which under current arraignments are able to free up there own nations Uranium deposits for use in weaponry.

"ATOMIC POWER" We have plentiful supplies of uranium to fuel these stations. There is little waste in a modern reactor, which recycle most of its by-products. Marry this with the First generation of Fusion Power plants of which need the heavy water as fuel, and you then have the means of producing pollutant free energy that uses the by-product of a fission plant, (heavy water) therefore removing the availability of this by-product as a means of creating nuclear weaponry. Today there are over 440 nuclear power stations operating in 31 countries with a combined capacity of 353 GWe. In 2000, these provided 2447 billion kWh, over 16% of the world's electricity. Some 31 new power reactors are currently being constructed in 11 countries, 16 with a total net capacity of over 11,000 MWe are expected to be in operation before the end of 2004. In the longer term over 44 power reactors with a total net capacity of about 41,000 MWe, are planned. Australia is now well behind in the technology and clean power race.

Many confuse GEOTHERMAL ENERGY with Hot Dry Rock. Geothermal heat over the whole world is less than one-sixth of its needs. Some volcanic areas are sufficient and can be harnessed effectively to provide for regional industrial needs, as in New Zealand, Japan, Ethiopia and Italy. The geothermal electricity stations are small – The one in New Zealand generates only about 150 megawatts of electricity. Another development will be the use of geothermal power deep in salt domes 5,000 to 18,000 metres below the surface. Based on 1980 figures, the cost of geothermal electricity could not compete with nuclear electricity. Geothermal energy could supplement but not resolve world needs. It is some what like solar energy; it's OK for low scale energy usage, but not economically viable for large-scale energy requirements.

"HOT DRY ROCK" HDR progress is most encouraging! A hot reservoir at "185 deg. C" has been formed and tested at an extraction rate of almost five megawatts of thermal energy! This is to be increased to 50 megawatts electrical energy! Such a reservoir should last 30 years at the very least. Though not yet fully developed or trialled, this currently untapped source of energy in the first 10 kilometres under the USA is estimated to be of the order of 13 million quads! (1 quad=1quadrillion British Thermal Units). This by far must be the most attractive option for future power generation without the concerns or cost of any (nuclear) fuel, pollutant or waste. In fact, we could pump sea water in and fresh water out, and at a higher volume than a desalination plant!

"One Nation" believes that HDR Power generation is by far the most efficient and safe option for large scale power production for our nation. We therefore see no option than pursue its implementation for this purpose should it prove viable with suitable locations.

We oppose the privatisation of our electricity generation and supply system. A lesson can be learned from what happened in California, Victoria and NSW, where short-sighted environmental policies and greed prevented the construction of new power plants resulting in rolling blackouts, huge price increases, factory shut downs and job losses. Privatisation and the Kyoto Accords will do for Australia what California's did for California. It will drive up energy prices which are already high by world standards, by compelling power plants to have to compete, make profit and reduce carbon dioxide emissions or pay hefty "carbon taxes" for burning fossil fuels. This will make Australia's goods more expensive and discourage new investment in manufacturing.

Sincerely,

Andrew Webber

Federal policy coordinator: One Nation NSW Division.