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MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIA SUPPORT URANIUM EXPORTS TO CHINA

A majority of Australians (58%) agree with Australia exporting uranium to China under the recently signed nuclear safeguard agreement a special telephone Roy Morgan Survey conducted for the 2006 Future Summit finds. The export of uranium to China under the proviso that exported uranium will only be used to generate power in China for civilian purposes and which Australia will be able to monitor, is opposed by 39% of Australians while 3% can't say.

A slightly smaller majority of Australians aged 14 and over (55%) believe that Australia should develop and export uranium for peaceful purposes, 35% believe Australia should not and 10% couldn't say. Six months ago in October 2005, 54% of Australians thought Australia should develop and export uranium for peaceful purposes – the lowest level of support since April 1979. The most recent survey shows a slight increase of 1% (to 55%) who support uranium exportation for peaceful purposes while 35% (down 3%) of Australians think that Australia should not develop and export uranium for peaceful purposes, 10% are undecided.

Analysis by voting intention shows interesting differences between L-NP and ALP supporters. While strong majorities of L-NP supporters (70%) say that Australia should develop and export uranium for peaceful purposes and agree with Australia exporting uranium to China under the safeguard agreement (73%) less than half of ALP supporters agree (47% for both). Only Greens supporters have a majority against both exporting uranium for peaceful purposes (56%) and exporting uranium to China (59%).

Gary Morgan says:

“A majority of Australians (58%) agree with the export of uranium to China under the safeguard agreement recently signed by the Australian and Chinese Governments.

However with 39% of Australians opposed to the export of uranium to China under the safeguard conditions, and 35% opposed to exporting uranium for peaceful purposes at all, there remains a substantial minority of Australians opposed to exporting uranium.

With the Labor Party considering repealing its “Three Mines” policy it is interesting to note that Labor Party supporters are fairly evenly divided about whether Australia should develop and export uranium for peaceful purposes with 47% in favour, 44% against and 9% unable to say.”

Special Roy Morgan Qualitative Research in which respondents gave their reason for agreeing or disagreeing with exporting uranium to China under the safeguard agreement was also conducted.

Two themes emerge amongst those who agree with exporting uranium to China, firstly many respondents believed exporting uranium to China would allow them to move away from power generation using fossil fuels: *“The present system in China uses coal and this adds to global warming”, “It’s a tidy, efficient energy source, but needs strict attention to the storage”, “Considering China’s needs for energy and that it is already polluted, uranium is probably an acceptable alternative for them” and “China has a huge population and have built 125 power stations in the last year. Providing uranium to China will help with global warming”.*

Other respondents who supported exporting uranium to China, believed uranium was simply a commodity that could be exported and provided Australia an opportunity to increase trade with China arguing: *“Because it is like a business, China is a huge trading partner, if they are going to sell to you, you have to sell to them – the world is a market economy”, “It would be good for trade and our relationships”, “It’s worth money, if we don’t sell it someone else will, the profit may help clear foreign debt”, “There are long-term trade benefits to Australia and China needs to have the energy considering the amount of goods they*

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are producing for the world” and “We are reaching a stage where China will take us over by trade instead of war, China want the uranium either way so we would be stupid not to sell to them”.

Those who disagreed with Australia exporting uranium to China, cited concerns over the effectiveness of the safeguards: *“Because Australia won’t be able to track the uranium as close as it needs to”, “The safeguards and all the guarantees are worthless – if they wanted to break those safeguards there would be nothing we could do about it” and “There is no such thing as using uranium for peaceful purposes, it’s a smokescreen for the Howard government making money. Sending our uranium to China only frees up other uranium she has for non-peaceful purposes”.*

Others who opposed the export of uranium to China were concerned about the dangers of nuclear reactors and of the waste they produced: *“What about the waste? We should consider past disasters like Chernobyl”, “Even though it is a somewhat clean source of energy, the waste material worries me – it needs to be stored for hundreds of thousands of years” and “Who deals with the waste products? If we’re going to sell it to them we should really take responsibility for the waste products, but I don’t want uranium waste in Australia”.*

This special telephone Roy Morgan Survey conducted for the 2006 Future Summit was conducted on April 5/6 with an Australia-wide cross-section of 669 men and women aged 14 and over. More details are available on a subscription basis. The Future Summit will be held at the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre on May 11/12 2006.

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1. Should Australia Develop And Export Uranium For Peaceful Purposes?

Respondents were asked: “Do you think Australia should - or should not develop and export uranium for peaceful purposes?”

	Total Respondents											
	Jul 1978	Apr 1979	Jul 1982	Jul 1983	Nov 1983	Apr 1984	Jun 1991	Mar 1996	Feb 2005	Mar 2005	Oct 2005	Apr 2006
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, should	59	54	66	66	66	65	62	60	59	61	54	55
No, should not	27	32	25	26	23	29	31	34	32	32	38	35
Can't say	14	14	9	8	11	6	7	6	9	7	8	10
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

L-NP supporters are most likely to agree with the development and export of uranium for peaceful purposes followed by supporters of Independent and Other candidates (53%) and those who did not express a voting intention and the supporters of the ALP (both 47%).

	Analysis by Federal Voting Intention					
	April 2006	L- NP	AL P	The Green s	Ind/ Other #	No Answer *
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, should	55	70	47	36	53	47
No, should not	35	22	44	56	38	38
Can't say	10	8	9	8	9	15
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution

*Includes all respondents who were undecided on voting intention, plus those ineligible to vote and those aged 14-17

Men (68%) are more likely than women (43%) to agree with exporting uranium for peaceful purposes and those aged 50 and over (58%) are more likely to agree than any other age group.

	Analysis by Sex and Age							
	April 2006	Men	Wome n	14-17#	18-24	25-34	35-49	50 ±
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, should	55	68	43	49	51	51	57	58
No, should not	35	27	43	37	41	38	33	36
Can't say	10	5	14	14	8	12	10	6
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution

Respondents from South Australia and the Northern Territory (65%) are most likely to say Australia should export Uranium for peaceful purposes, followed by those in NSW (59%), Queensland (57%) and Tasmania (57%).

	Analysis by Region and State								
	April 2006	Metro	Countr y	NS W	Vic	Qld	SA/NT	WA	Tas #
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Yes, should	55	55	56	59	48	57	65	48	57
No, should not	35	36	34	32	43	31	24	43	36
Can't say	10	9	10	9	9	12	11	9	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution

2. Uranium Exports to China

Respondents were then told: “Recently the Federal Government signed a nuclear safeguard agreement with China. The agreement ensures that any exported uranium will only be used to generate power in China for civilian purposes, and that Australia will be able to track its use.” They were then asked: “Do you agree with Australia exporting uranium to China under these conditions?”

L-NP supporters (73%), followed by supporters of Independents and Other candidates (56%) and those who did not express a voting intention (60%) are most likely to support exporting uranium to China under the safeguard agreement signed with China.

Analysis by Federal Voting Intention

	April 2006	The		Ind/	No	
		L- NP	AL P	Green s	Other #	Answer *
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	58	73	47	39	56	60
Disagree	39	25	51	59	39	33
Can't say	3	2	2	2	5	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution

*Includes all respondents who were undecided on voting intention, plus those ineligible to vote and those aged 14-17

Men (63%) are more likely than women (53%) to agree with exporting uranium to China under the safeguard agreement and those aged 14-17 (70%) are more likely than any other age group to agree with the possible exports.

Analysis by Sex and Age

	April 2006	Men	Wome	14-17#	18-24	25-34	35-49	50
		%	n	%	%	%	%	%
Agree	58	63	53	70	62	57	58	56
Disagree	39	36	42	28	35	39	40	41
Can't say	3	1	5	2	3	4	2	3
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution

Respondents in South Australia and the Northern Territory (72%) were more likely to agree with exporting uranium to China under the safeguards than respondents in any other States, followed by those in Queensland (60%) and NSW (59%).

Analysis by Region and State

	April 2006	Metro	Countr	NS	Vic	Qld	SA/NT	WA	Tas
		%	y	W	%	%	%	%	#
Agree	58	60	55	59	53	60	72	55	45
Disagree	39	37	42	38	44	38	26	38	55
Can't say	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	7	-
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Sample sizes less than 50 should be treated with caution

The Morgan Poll is conducted by the **ONLY** Australian member of the Gallup International Association. No Other public opinion poll taken in Australia has this qualification.