



FUTURE SUMMIT

Brisbane

## 60pc back uranium to China

Andrew Fraser

ALMOST three out of five Australians support the export of uranium to China, with only some Labor supporters and Greens opposed.

Australia's changing relationship with Asia — including whether the region should be supplied with Australian uranium — will be at the centre of discussions at the third Future Summit, to be held in Brisbane on May 11-12, of which *The Australian* is a sponsor.

A survey commissioned for the summit found that 55 per cent of those questioned support the uranium export agreement signed with China last week, 35 per cent are opposed and 10 per cent undecided.

The young are far more likely than the old to support the export of uranium to China for peaceful purposes. Seventy per cent of those aged between 14 and 17 support the agreement, falling to 56 per cent for those aged over 50.

Overall, the level of support for uranium mining has remained fairly constant over the past 30 years. In 1978, 59 per cent of Australians supported it, rising to a high of 66 per cent in 1983 before declining to its current level of 55 per cent.

The Roy Morgan survey reveals major differences between supporters of different political parties, with a solid majority of Coalition voters (70 per cent) believing Australia should develop and export uranium for peaceful purposes.

The survey underlines the difficulties faced by Labor leaders considering scrapping its no more mines policy, with 47 per cent of supporters favouring an expansion of the industry.

While the Howard Government signed the uranium agreement with China, control of minerals rests with the states, which are subject to the Labor policy of no more than the three existing uranium mines.

While the Morgan data does not give a state-by-state breakdown of the views of Labor voters, it shows that among the broader population, opposition to the nuclear industry is concentrated most strongly in Victoria and Western Australia.

The survey also shows one of the major reasons for supporting the export of uranium to China was that it would lessen that country's dependence on fossil fuels such as coal.