



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Mines and Petroleum**



# URANIUM

Resources and Regulations  
in Western Australia

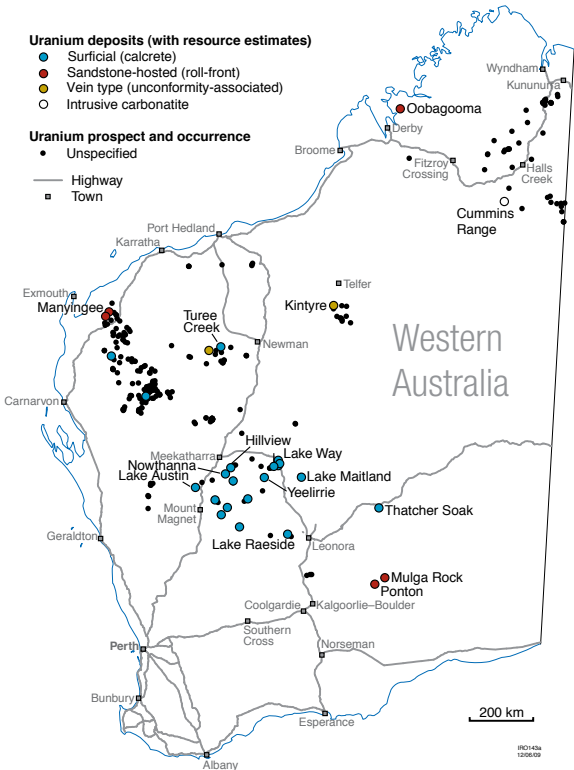
*Developing a sustainable resources future*

Mining uranium in Western Australia was prohibited under the policy of the former State Government from June 2002 to September 2008. The current State Government revoked the ban on November 17, 2008 and is now focusing on developing this sector.

The Government is committed to ensuring that the State's regulatory framework is world's best practice and that associated agencies have the resources to manage radiation issues associated with uranium mining. No compromises will be made on health, safety and environmental standards.

Uranium mining in Western Australia will allow greater financial prosperity, create employment opportunities and will allow further global recognition of the quality and quantity of the State's minerals and resources.

The State Government supports the mining and export of uranium for peaceful purposes only, which is consistent with the Commonwealth Government policy. The State Government does not support the construction or operation of a nuclear power facility in the State and has legislation in place to prevent nuclear waste being brought into Western Australia.



**Distribution of known uranium deposits and occurrences in Western Australia**

## **WA'S URANIUM RESOURCES**

Western Australia has known resources of 193,000 tonnes of uranium oxide in 29 projects and has significant potential for additional deposits to be discovered with many promising areas yet to be tested.

Australia has 36 per cent of known global reserves of uranium of which Western Australia has five to eight per cent.

Western Australia has the potential to become a significant global supplier of uranium at a time when the demand for nuclear fuel is increasing.

The price of uranium is holding firm due to the high demand for nuclear power, when most commodities are suffering a downward trend.

This means investment in uranium mining has the potential to offer a significant financial return for Western Australia in an otherwise unsettled global financial market.

In Western Australia, five resource companies have mining projects that are already significantly advanced with some of the projects expected to commence mining in, or after, 2012.

The known uranium deposits in Western Australia are found in remote areas of the Midwest Goldfields, North Eastern and South Eastern Goldfields, Kimberley and the Pilbara regions.

## **REGULATION OF THE INDUSTRY**

The transfer of the Resources Safety Division to the Department of Mines and Petroleum has enhanced the agency's powers to regulate radiation safety in the uranium mining industry.

Despite the ban on uranium mining only recently being lifted, Western Australian regulators and the mining industry have been working with radioactive material in mineral sands and tantalum, which has been mined, transported and exported from the State for 40 years.

These operations are already strictly regulated under the *Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations 1995* and the *Radiation Safety Act 1975*, which are administered by DMP's Resources Safety Division and Environment Division, and the Radiological Council of Western Australia respectively.

## **URANIUM INDUSTRY FRAMEWORK**

The successful development of the Western Australian uranium sector is further supported by the State Government's and industry's involvement in the Uranium Industry Framework Implementation Group (UIF).

The UIF Steering Group was initiated in 2005 in partnership with Commonwealth, South Australian and Northern Territory Governments, and other key stakeholders to assist in further developing the uranium industry over the short, medium and long term, while maintaining the highest safety and environmental standards.

In January 2007, the UIF Implementation Group was established as a joint industry-government body, to implement the 20 recommendations made in the UIF report of 2006.

The framework is guided by four main aims:

1. To increase Australia's international competitiveness;
2. To facilitate increased mining and exploration of uranium;
3. To ensure a consistent, effective and efficient regulatory regime for the mining of uranium; and
4. To encourage a wider community understanding and acceptance of the economic and social benefits of uranium mining.

The UIF focuses exclusively on issues directly related to the mining, exploration, milling and transportation of uranium.

## **COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

The State Government is committed to working with established communities and indigenous groups with programs to ensure there is a well-informed public understanding of the development of uranium mining in Western Australia.

The State Government will work with industry to engage with communities that will be potentially affected by the development of mine sites and transport routes.

The Government has also formed an inter-agency uranium working group which includes representatives from the Department of Mines and Petroleum, the Department of State Development, the Department of Environment and Conservation, the Environmental Protection Authority Service Unit and the Health Department.

The working group has reviewed current legislation and regulations, and has identified the additional technical resources required to deal with uranium mining.

Western Australia has also been meeting with the South Australian and Northern Territory Governments to learn from their experience in monitoring and regulating uranium mining.

## ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH PROTECTION

The State Government does not support the export of uranium through any ports surrounded by residential development.

The State Government will ensure the highest standards apply for environmental protection, occupational health and safety, and transportation, to the mining and export of uranium in this State.

It will be a requirement for any proposal.

Protection of the environment is of paramount importance. Any proposed uranium mining project will be subject to detailed mining proposals and environmental scrutiny, including referral under the *State Environmental Protection Act 1986* and the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

In Western Australia, mineral sands workers have the most up-to-date workplace health information, which is considered as a benchmark for radiation safety practices by industry experts worldwide.

The regulatory framework for the transportation of material from uranium mining sites is regulated by Commonwealth, State and Territory jurisdictions. The framework currently abides by the *Code of Practice for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Substances 1990*.

This code was formulated under the provisions of the *Environment Protection (Nuclear Codes) Act 1978* and is based on international guidelines for the transportation of radioactive material.



For further information on uranium  
mining in Western Australia, please visit  
**[www.dmp.wa.gov.au](http://www.dmp.wa.gov.au)**

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