

Extract from Hansard
[ASSEMBLY - Tuesday, 11 August 2009]
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Dr Mike Nahan; Mr Colin Barnett
URANIUM MINING LAKE MAITLAND PROJECT

577. Dr M.D. NAHAN to the Premier:

I refer to the recent signing of a joint venture between Mega Uranium and the Japan Australia Uranium Resources Development Company and Itochu Minerals Energy of Australia for a stake in the Lake Maitland project, and ask the Premier to inform the house of progress in the development of uranium mining in Western Australia.

Mr C.J. BARNETT replied:

I thank the member for Riverton for the question. As the member said, last month Mega Uranium signed a US \$49 million joint venture agreement with the Japan Australia Uranium Resources Development Company, a bit of a mouthful and Itochu Australia for a 35 per cent stake in the Lake Maitland project. It is near Wiluna.

This project is proceeding at a fairly rapid pace and Mega expects to be the first uranium mine in Western Australia and to be in production by the end of 2011.

The signing was a significant step in the mining history of this state. I was in China at the time that the Chinese Deputy Premier took part in that ceremony. He also welcomed the federal resources minister, Martin Ferguson, who signed that agreement to set in place a commonwealth and a state agreement for the development of the uranium mining industry.

Members on this side of the house support the mining industry, and we support uranium mining. This was the issue that the Australian Labor Party campaigned on most strongly at the last state election. People had leaflet after leaflet stuffed into their letterboxes about the dangers of uranium mining.

Fortunately, the federal resources minister, Martin Ferguson, is a little more enlightened than members opposite and he supports it.

I happened to notice a newspaper headline. Labor heat from inside to hold line on uranium, with an accompanying photograph. The caption read: Tough line: Alannah MacTiernan has signed the anti-uranium plea. The articles stated that a letter signed by Ms Alannah MacTiernan was sent out the previous week calling for delegates at the ALP national conference to oppose the approval of new uranium mines.

Where is the would be member for Canning going to stand now? She is still a frontbench member of a party that opposes uranium mining. She aspires to be the member for Canning to join Kevin Rudd in Canberra. He supports uranium mining!

Where does the member for Armadale stand? Is she now supporting or opposing it? Come on, tell us! The member should let us out of our misery. Is the member for uranium mining or anti-uranium mining?

Several members interjected.

Mr C.J. BARNETT: This article was published a couple of years ago.

Mr D.A. Templeman: A couple of years ago you were going to retire!

Mr C.J. BARNETT: And I am back; I am here! I am being fair. In 2007, the member for Armadale signed the anti-uranium plea. Two years on, she is now going to stand as a candidate in Canning. She wants to be part of Kevin Rudd's federal government. I will give the member 24 hours to answer this question: the public of Western Australia need to know whether she now supports uranium mining, or will I have to tell my friend Kevin, Don't rely on Alannah. You can't trust her; don't rely on her? I would hate to have to do that, but if I must, I must!

There are other issues, too. The member for Armadale and candidate for Canning has argued against Oakajee. She has argued against public investment in Oakajee. My friend Kevin has put \$400 million

into Oakajee, as we have. Where will the member stand on that? Will she be for public investment in Oakajee or against public investment in Oakajee?