

Australians For Animals

Newsletter

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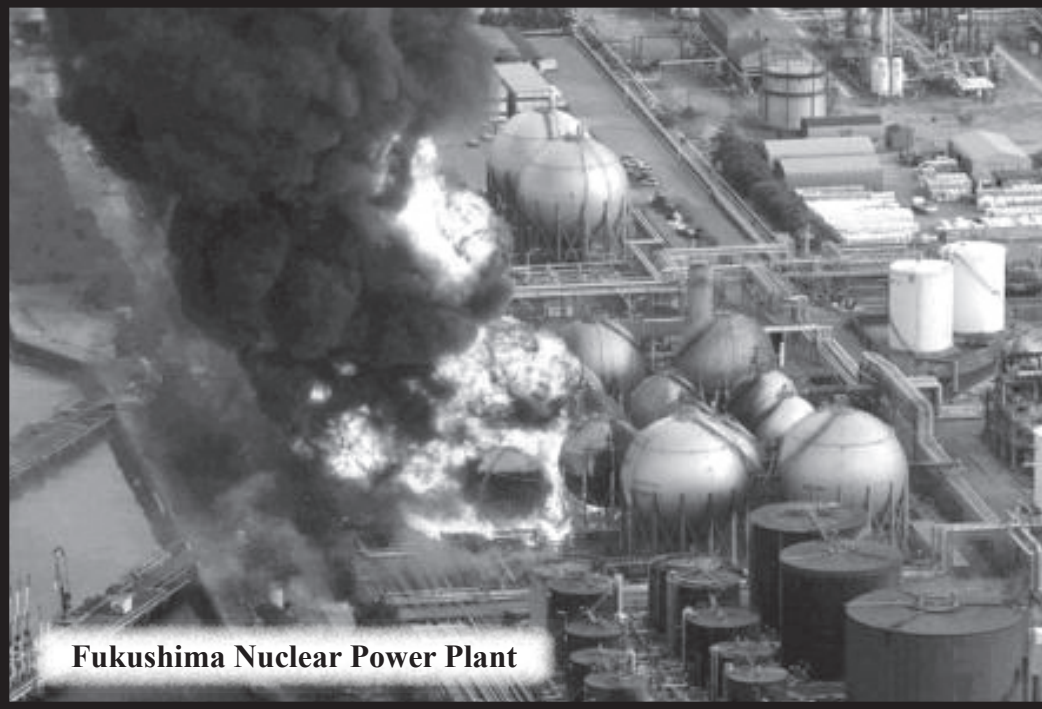
NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE

in Japan

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Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant

Dear Friends,

It's simply astonishing to see the way mainstream media in Australia has moved the ongoing crisis in Japan off the front pages, relegating very short and often incorrect stories to the back of the newspapers.

Only SBS has given the crisis any kind of decent coverage.

Make no mistake. The nuclear meltdown currently taking place in Japan has profound ramifications for the whole world as the deadly radioactive particles circulate in the jet stream and ocean currents. There's simply no handbook for a disaster like this, one that involves not one reactor but six !

Dr Helen Caldicott is currently in the US on a lecture tour, she's been interviewed several times on Democracy Now (an excellent objective free press in the US) and other non-mainstream media outlets.

It's very clear from Helen's analysis of the situation that there's no end in sight to the leaking of deadly radioactive material. Nor is there any parallel in history of people being constantly exposed to increasing radiation levels, exposure which could continue for years as Japanese authorities struggle to stop the reactors emitting their deadly particles.

The weather maps which have been put together by European authorities demonstrate the extent and frequency of the radioactive clouds of material pushing across the Pacific Ocean to the West coast of the US, the east coast and onto Europe. The clouds keep coming because the Japanese government doesn't know how to stop the reactors spewing the waste into the air and sea.

Thankfully, the Southern Hemisphere is not as exposed as the Northern

hemisphere. But eventually, the radioactive particles will spread around the world.

Meantime, 150,000 Japanese people are living in evacuation centres, many have lost their loved ones, their homes, their livelihoods. Thousands and thousands of children have been left orphaned by the earthquake and tsunami. The weather is bitterly cold and it's difficult to get the help needed through to all the evacuation centres.

And, as always, the animals are left. Left to survive on their own, without food, shelter and the comfort of familiar surroundings. There has been very little coverage of their plight.. AFA knows that Japanese animal groups have done what they can; the sheer size of the disaster requiring a similar magnitude of assistance. Cows, dogs, cats have been left to die in irradiated areas. Animals are left to wander around the

wreckages of towns, without food or water, slowly dying of starvation and thirst. Dolphins and porpoises have been found in the middle of rice fields, struggling to survive in small pools of water. Some have been rescued and put back into the ocean.

But now as the internet reports reveal the extent of the damage which the nuclear reactors are experiencing, the coastal sea is becoming a poison dump as tests show radioactive iodine 131 levels more than 4,000 times over the acceptable limit. As the toxic material descends to the sea bottom, phytoplankton will be poisoned and gradually spread through the food chain as its consumed from one trophic layer to the next.

There will be huge areas of land which will be uninhabitable for years and years. One nuclear expert is now warning that it will take 50 to 100 years before the spent nuclear rods at Fukushima will cool enough to be removed from the site. In the mean time, Japan must keep pouring water on the fuel, and that creates highly radioactive water that's being flushed directly into the ocean. So now we're looking at the possibility of a century-long radiation leak (<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/...>).

- The groundwater underneath the Fukushima nuclear power facility is now showing 10,000 times the level of radiation normally allowed by government authorities. This is from iodine-131 measured at 15 meters below one of the reactors. (<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011...>)

Radioactive isotopes unique to the Fukushima disaster are now being detected in at least 15 US states, according to recent reports from CNN

Learn more: http://www.naturalnews.com/031909_radiation_milk.html#ixzz1IGE5TomV

Radioactive Iodine-131 in rainwater sample near San Francisco was 18,100% above federal drinking water standard as at March 31st, 2011

Of course nothing happens immediately with radioactive contamination. It takes years for the cancers and leukemia to become evident. Birth defects and deformities are the most immediate response to these kinds of events but the Japanese government has been less than honest in not only its appraisal of the seriousness of the nuclear situation, the government has failed to adequately protect its citizens.

We will probably never know the death toll caused by the leaking nuclear reactors. If ever there was a cast iron case against nuclear energy, Japan's nuclear disaster is absolutely irrefutable evidence.

WHAT ABOUT JAPAN'S WHALING ?

AFA is an International Whaling Commission NGO. The charity has asked other IWC NGOs what is likely to happen at the forthcoming meeting of the IWC in June. The annual slaughter in Antarctica was stopped early by the Japanese government as the harassment of Sea Shepherd proved very successful in preventing hundreds of whales being killed.

NGOs have been expecting Japan to try and do a deal at the IWC meeting which would have seen the country withdraw from Antarctica in exchange for the right to start coastal whaling off Japan's coastline.

A dirty deal which would have seen precedents set that could only result in

coastal whaling becoming yet another category of whaling permitted under the IWC.

Opinion is divided. We know that one major Japanese port where whaling vessels sail out from is completely destroyed. AFA believe it is now highly unlikely that Japan will continue to seek to be compensated for withdrawing from Antarctica by the IWC allowing coastal whaling. The coastal seas off Japan are now highly contaminated by radioactive particles, the charity predicts Japan will insist on going back on the deal and continuing to kill whales in Antarctica.

AFA believes the IWC will be deeply sympathetic to Japan in its current plight. Given that Japan is a nation which depends on seafood as its primary diet, and given that the supply of seafood will be contaminated; its more than likely the huge warehouses full of frozen whale meat will be emptied to fill the gap. And more whales needed to feed a seafood starved population.

AFA hopes we're wrong on this one. The chaos in Japan is so bad that there's a good chance no government bureaucrats or politicians are focused on the whaling issue because of the ongoing crises at every level. But the potential is there.

Remember that the Humpbacks are the main goal of Japan in this dirty game of whaling chess. AFA believes they are more at risk than ever as a result of this nightmare. We will keep you posted.

AUSTRALIA'S SILENCE ON THE NUCLEAR NIGHTMARE

AFA can only wonder if the huge sales of uranium from the mines operating in this

country might be the reason for the colossal disinterest by the mainstream media in the full extent of the nuclear crisis.

With more and more exploration being undertaken in the NT and South Australia by overseas interests, the damage to Aboriginal lands is not only increasing but leaving a deadly trail behind these efforts.

AFA has worked with and funded the Indigenous Justice Advocacy Network, a grass roots group taking on massive legal issues for the Indigenous community. The charity is horrified by reports of contamination and pollution left by mining companies affecting aquifers, creeks and rivers.

Even more concerning is the almost complete lack of attention on these critical issues by the major conservation groups. Which brings AFA to yet another outrageous situation.

WHO ARE THE NSW GREENS ???

A couple of days before the NSW State election, AFA received on one of our email networks a hand-out from the NSW Greens on 10 reasons to vote Green in the NSW election.

Not ONE single reason mentioned the environment save for Item 10 which was "Planning for people and the environment" relating solely to developers and planning problems.

This is incredible stuff. Given the massive environmental problems facing NSW, it is nothing short of extraordinary that a so-called Green Party focuses on everything BUT the environment. In the cinemas right now is the documentary "GASLAND" which is a badly made US doco on the latest environmental

nightmare – fracking – or mining for gas. Some of you might remember seeing people in the US light the water coming out of their household taps because of the gas exploration. As the mining rights in Australia trump farming rights, farmers across the land could see their farming land covered in drilling rigs, polluting the aquifers, allowing strangers to come onto properties employed by the mining companies.

There's huge protests in Queensland and as the mining companies spread their considerable efforts into NSW, expect a lot more community outrage. Yet in spite of the publicity given to fracking, not a word appears on the NSW Greens 10 reasons.

Nor is there a word about wildlife; the plight of koalas who are disappearing down the road to extinction in this state is absolutely parlous, desperately in need of political focus. Nothing about Part 3A of the Planning Act which has allowed the NSW State government to over-ride Councils' refusal to allow mega developments; mega festivals and totally inappropriate development to go ahead.

No mention of the continuing rape of our native forests or the importance of ensuring our National Parks are not allowed to become shooting galleries for hunters.

There's no practical policies on renewable energy; sustainable communities; community farming; protection and clean up of our increasingly polluted rivers. Nothing. Surely this is a time to put positive projects on renewable energy to the electorate in this time of global warming.

AFA is deeply concerned by the lack of focus on the

environment and wildlife. The charity has read recent reports which detail a resolution passed by the NSW Greens calling for a boycott of Israel over the Israel/Palestine problems.

What on earth has this issue got to do with a state party which is supposed to be about the environment and social justice? Without a healthy environment, there can be no social justice. There's more than enough problems in NSW without casting the net overseas. If the NSW Greens have to look overseas, why not start with Japan and the nuclear nightmare engulfing that country. The ramifications of leaking radiation are so profoundly serious and provide an important moment to educate people on why nuclear reactors are NOT the solution for our energy crisis.

AFA hopes that the NSW Green Party will take a good look at its policies. But we fear the rot has set in and the new Green Senators in the Federal parliament will be far more focused on gay marriage rights, refugee rights and other non-environmental issues.

The only consolation is the fact that western nations are all in much the same place. Hung parliaments; deep divisions between political parties; political refusal to listen to the people or put in place policies which are what the voting public want. In the US, the Republican dominated Congress has held up funding the Government for weeks and weeks. Funding is granted for two week periods and then the fight starts again. Many critically important US agencies have no ability to budget, plan, continue research or institute any new programs. It's almost total deadlock, stalemate in the world's only super power.



Coyotes - A most adaptable species

GRAY WHALES IN MEXICO.

Our Co-ordinator has just returned from a trip to the US and Baja, Mexico where she spent time checking on the Gray Whales at San Ignacio Laguna, a magnificent World Heritage Area in the Mexican desert wilderness.

For the first time in five years, Gray Whale numbers have improved. This year there were few skinny whales and many cows and calves compared to the last few years. Unfortunately, one good season doesn't make for a sustained recovery and there is concern amongst scientists AFA works with that the increase may not continue.

This year there seemed to be many young cows with calves, they had fewer barnacles and most were

smaller than the big Mamas which are usually a highlight of the Laguna.

It was incredible to see the explosion in coyotes. Almost every night a mob of wild dogs would howl at the edge of the Laguna. It was even more astounding to see the coyotes go into the water at low tide, hunting for octopi. Mexican fishermen swear this story we're about to tell you, is true.

Coyotes have been seen pushing their tail into the gap in big clam shells which litter the Laguna bed at low tide, waiting for the shell to close around the tail, then going to the nearest rock and banging the shell until it breaks giving the dogs a fresh meal of clams!

No one has ever heard of coyotes eating octopi, much less clams. The wild dogs

are so adapted to the harsh environment they swim several miles across to a nearby island where they take the eggs from birds' nest creating major problems in the bird populations which reside there. There's almost no water in the desert, so the coyotes come into the camps at night to drink the grey water which overflows from camp showers.

SUCCESS WITH AFA'S EFFORTS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT NSW COUNCIL POUNDS.

We told you in our last newsletter of the decision of AFA's committee to get involved in a shocking case of cruelty which had taken place at a north coast Council Pound. We're going to name the Council as AFA has been successful in turning a very nasty incident into a positive which, hopefully, will have ramifications for the whole state and potentially, other states.

After a long search, the charity was able to find a lawyer who was not only deeply interested in helping animal issues but had the experience and willingness to help. As we suspected, Tweed Shire Council had allowed events to take place which had the potential to end up in court.

With the help of Mark Pearson, Animal Liberation NSW, AFA, together with the lawyer, organised a deputation to meet with Tweed Council's General Manager. Animal Lib brought one of its investigators to the meeting which AFA had arranged. We flew the lawyer up from Sydney for the meeting, the best value for dollars the charity has spent in years !

But there was a moment when the best laid plans looked like going severely



astray. We'd arranged for the lawyer to fly to Coolangatta on Virgin, arriving in good time for the meeting at Tweed Council. However, the traffic gridlock in Sydney, truly an absolute nightmare for anyone driving a car to work or attempting to catch a plane, took its toll. Our lawyer was stuck in a traffic jam for over half an hour with no possibility of escape. He missed the plane.

Thanks to the understanding of the Tweed Council General Manager, we were able to push the meeting forward a few hours and it all worked out in the end. But the problems created by Sydney's dreadfully congested roads must be awful, making planning to get to airports, appointments and important meetings nothing more than a guessing game.

HOPE FOR CHANGE IN NSW POUNDS.

Tweed Council, in response to AFA's considerable dossier of complaints, has agreed to set up an Advisory Committee on the Pound. The General Manager has assured the charity he would like to see the Pound become a template for the way Pounds are run throughout the state. Great !!!

The Council has agreed to the Advisory Committee and the first meeting will be held at the end of April.

Queensland's Animal Welfare League with its wonderful program known as "Getting to Zero" will be a member of the Committee. The League's Shelter on the Gold Coast has an incredible record. Last year 91% of

dogs were re-homed as well as 75% of cats.

The situation in NSW pounds is long overdue for intense political focus and action. AFA is deeply concerned that non-veterinarians are allowed to euthanase animals in some pounds and worse still, that certain methods which should never be allowed, are happening. The charity will lobby the new NSW government to bring about immediate changes in euthanasia protocols. But our main focus will be to support Queensland's Animal Welfare League in the "Getting to Zero" campaign in NSW.

AFA knows that many groups have tried to bring about changes in NSW pounds and pounds in every state. Many wonderful volunteers work in these places, it's a pretty heartbreaking task unless the pound has an active re-homing focus. The charity is happy to be a member of the Advisory Committee set up by Tweed Shire Council. Hopefully, change will come.

RESCUE CAT UPDATE.

After homeopathics; animal communicators; ferramone sprays; rolled up newspaper threats; creating rescue-cat free zones; many human to cat discussions, we're pleased to report peace seems to be at hand.

Monsterring is at a minimum and whilst there's no current likelihood of friendship, at least there's a truce! Thanks to everyone for their valuable feedback.

For the Animals,

Sue Arnold & Friends