

Australia will consider nuclear power: Howard

Australia will consider using nuclear power in the future, Prime Minister John Howard said Friday, dubbing opponents 'foolish and old-fashioned'.

Releasing the final report of a review into nuclear energy, uranium mining and processing by a government-appointed task force, Howard said it was clear that nuclear power was part of the solution to Australia's future energy needs and the challenge of climate change.

'The reality is we won't have nuclear power stations tomorrow, but over time if we are to have a sensible response we have to include nuclear power,' he said in a report on ABC Radio.

Howard said it was 'foolish and backward-looking and old fashioned' of people to say they would always oppose the use of nuclear power.

He rejected fears about the safety of nuclear power plants, saying he would not object to having one next door to his own home.

Australia has about 30 percent of the world's uranium deposits and Howard called on the state governments to drop current bans on mining and exports.

He said that while nuclear energy was still up to 50 percent more expensive than other forms of power, the difference was expected to reduce over time.

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