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MEDIA RELEASE

NQCC remembers Fukushima with a call for a nuclear-free Townsville

North Queensland Conservation Council is marking the second anniversary of the Fukushima nuclear disaster in Japan with a call for Townsville City Council to reaffirm its commitment to a nuclear-free city.

'Prior to the redevelopment of the old Flinders Street Mall, there was a sign on display in the Mall declaring Townsville to be a nuclear-free city. It seems this sign disappeared during the make-over' said NQCC Coordinator Wendy Tubman. 'We want to see it back.'

'With the state government keen to re-start the uranium mining industry in Queensland, there is the very real possibility that the previously closed mine at Ben Lomond in the headwaters of our water supply, and just 40 km from North Ward and 30 km from Kirwan, will be re-opened' she said.

'Mining uranium produces radioactive waste that remains dangerous for tens of thousands of years, threatening the environment, water supplies and air quality, and posing a serious health risk to workers and surrounding communities.

Contrary to often expressed views, uranium is never likely to be a big export earner for Australia, nor is it likely to create many jobs.

'Mining uranium so close to such a large population centre, and possibly transporting it around town for export through the port, would involve unacceptable risks.

'Getting uranium mines up to production is a very lengthy process; by the time Queensland could have uranium mines up and running at full production it is quite likely that the world will have shifted to renewable energy, and the risks associated with uranium mining will have been taken for nothing.'

Townsville's sister city of Iwaki in Fukushima Prefecture was ravaged in the 11 March 2011 tsunami-led nuclear disaster.

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