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Women long-term thinkers on nuclear

Illawarra Mercury, Wollongong

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WE ARE thinking of our communities, our families, our children, our grandchildren who deserve to inherit a world that is as safe as can be.

The safety of our future generations is one of the reasons why women are overwhelmingly opposed to nuclear energy in Australia.

New research by DemosAu has revealed just 26 per cent of women think nuclear would be good for Australia, compared to 51 per cent of men.

As the founder of 1 Million Women, this result is no surprise.

When we asked our supporter base about their views on nuclear energy, more than 3000 women responded and 93 per cent said they have concerns about nuclear energy.

At the very top of the list of concerns was nuclear energy's potential to derail the renewable energy transition in Australia.

Rapidly phasing out coal and gas and transitioning to clean and cheap renewable energy is one of the best solutions to prevent climate breakdown and protect our families from unnatural disasters, including prolonged heat waves.

Women don't have the time or patience to entertain a nuclear option when we already have the solutions, right here, right now in Australia. Electricity produced by our abundance of sun and wind just makes sense - it's also proven to be the cheapest way to produce energy.

The cost-of-living crisis is hitting households hard, and women often make sacrifices to provide for loved ones, so again, it makes sense to opt for the cheapest and cleanest form of energy.

The DemosAU research, commissioned by the Australian Conservation Foundation, also revealed many women have concerns about the safety of nuclear technology. Our supporters agree that transporting radioac-

tive nuclear waste is not worth the risk.

Many of our supporters said their biggest concern about nuclear energy was managing and storing radioactive waste in the country.

For decades, Indigenous peoples have been at the forefront of protecting communities, land and waterways from the nuclear industry. The 1 Million Women community acknowledges the heavy and unfair burden nuclear energy places on First Nations peoples.

Interestingly, the DemosAU research reveals support for nuclear energy among men started to dwindle when they were probed about the realities and consequences of nuclear energy.

Just one in three men surveyed by DemosAU said they'd be happy living near a nuclear site. And almost half of all men share safety concerns around nuclear technology.

It's clear to me women want the federal government to remain on track with its renewable plan. Any proposal to include nuclear in the mix is too costly, too slow and too risky.

One woman who lives in the central west of New South Wales said nuclear is "a distraction from the urgency of what we have to do now, and a disruption to what has already been achieved in the renewable energy space". 1 Million Women is dedicated to helping women and households electrify, get off gas and be ready for a renewable energy future.

The female vote was significant in the outcome of the 2022 federal election. Women voted for meaningful climate action. The way we power our country should be about cutting climate pollution - not about politics.

■ Natalie Isaacs is the founder and CEO of 1 Million Women, the Australian-based women's movement for practical action on the climate crisis.



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Women are looking towards a future with cleaner energy. Picture Shutterstock