



**Solar energy backed by G-G
ALGA News May 23, 2008**

Governor-General Major General Michael Jeffrey has stepped into the energy debate, saying solar power is Australia's best prospect of securing a large-scale clean and sustainable energy source.

Speaking at a Future Summit in Sydney, he suggested water, food and the environment would be among Australia's top issues in 50 years time, and that all three were linked to plentiful and reasonably priced energy.

Major General Jeffrey also told the summit that thorium - a naturally occurring and slightly radioactive metal - should be explored as a nuclear fuel alternative, as well as the potential to extract oil from shale deposits in central Queensland.

But he says improving solar technology is a priority. "The Australian scientists suggest that they could meet the total energy needs of Australia with a solar panel array of around 50 kilometres squared," he said. "How to store and then distribute that energy remains the technical problem requiring rapid resolution."

Major General Jeffrey says the use of thorium as a nuclear fuel alternative could prove to be an important means of securing Australia's future energy supply

**Thorium – the safer nuclear alternative
10 December 2007**

Member for Flinders Liz Penfold has argued for more research into the use of thorium-232 to replace uranium as a power generator.

In parliament recently Mrs Penfold quoted University of Adelaide's Professor Stephen Lincoln, Professor of Chemistry and the author of Challenged Earth, to support the use of this safer, more plentiful nuclear fuel in our backyard.

Thorium is a fuel that offers to reduce climate-change gases and consume dangerous weapons-grade plutonium and uranium.

According to Professor Lincoln, Thorium is a slightly radioactive metallic element that cannot sustain a nuclear reaction alone, making it a safer fuel and reducing its usefulness as a weapon. The radioactive waste produced by thorium has a shorter life span than other uranium fuels.

There are three times more known reserves of thorium than uranium in the world. A quarter of these reserves are in Australia with some deposits in the Gawler Craton on Eyre Peninsula.

Mrs Penfold said Australia could take back other nuclear waste, particularly plutonium, created from the sale of our uranium, while nuclear reactors could be powered with thorium.

“I believe that we are morally obliged to take back these wastes to ensure a safer world. Currently our uranium, after use, can easily find its way to less stable countries where it could be used to devastate us and the people of the world far more efficiently than climate change,” she said.

Professor Lincoln estimated that it will be another decade before electricity is generated from thorium-232.

Visit www.lizpenfold.com for the full speech, or call her office for a copy of the speech and Professor Lincoln’s article.