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Media release

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Australia still doesn't want to go nuclear

Reports of a dramatic shift in support among Australians for nuclear power are incorrect and based on inaccurate analysis according to new research by the Australia Institute.

Only one third of Australians support the construction of nuclear power plants in Australia.

The finding is made in *Attitudes to Nuclear Power: Are they shifting?*, a paper analysing support for nuclear power in Australia by Institute Deputy Director Andrew Macintosh and Executive Director Dr Clive Hamilton.

“In March, *The Australian* newspaper claimed Newspoll surveys showed there had been a dramatic reversal in attitudes to nuclear power. But *The Australian* seriously misrepresented the results of the surveys by comparing the responses to two different questions,” Dr Hamilton said.

“Our results show that attitudes to nuclear power have been fairly stable since the Federal Government began its nuclear campaign 12 months ago and that there is still widespread opposition to nuclear power.”

Polling for the Institute by Newspoll in April 2007 found that 36 per cent of Australians support the construction of nuclear power plants, similar to the findings in Newspoll surveys from May and December 2006.

“Since December 2006, opposition to nuclear energy has declined slightly, falling from 50 per cent to 46 per cent. However, substantially more people oppose nuclear energy than support it and the proportion of Australians who are strongly opposed to nuclear power is almost double that which is strongly in favour,” Mr Macintosh said.

The survey found that opposition to nuclear power is highest among females (55 per cent), the young (49 per cent) and middle-aged (49 per cent), parents (50 per cent), people from middle income households (49 per cent) and those living in Tasmania (57 per cent), Western Australia (55 per cent) and Victoria (51 per cent). Support for nuclear power is highest amongst males (47 per cent), older Australians (43 per cent), people without children (40 per cent) and those living in South Australia (47 per cent) and New South Wales (41 per cent).

“Despite the Government’s promotion campaign, there is still widespread opposition to nuclear power. The Government has a considerable amount of work to do if it wants to win the Australian public’s support for its nuclear strategy”, Mr Macintosh said.

Copies of the report are available on the Australia Institute website.

www.tai.org.au