



# Queensland's nuclear landscape

Used in British atom bombs, Australian uranium may now power the nuclear warships, potentially carrying nuclear weapons that visit Qld's larger ports. With the federal government aggressively pushing for an expansion to the nuclear industry, Qld must take stock of its place in the nuclear landscape.

## Uranium Mines and Exploration

Despite a current ban on uranium mining in the state, uranium exploration is taking place in Queensland. There are at least 13 sites under lease and exploration.

### Westmoreland, near Settlement Creek

Location: 400km N Mt Isa, extends into NT. Owner: Laramide Resources Ltd. licensed from Rio Tinto. Main deposits are near Redtree Dyke in the catchment of Settlement Creek, one of the eight gulf country rivers being considered for Wild Rivers protection by the QLD state government. Westmoreland is inundated in the wet season, creating habitat for numerous wetland birds, including endemic and endangered species.

### Valhalla, Skal and Anderson's Lode

Location: 40km N of Mt Isa. Owner: Summit Resources & Resolute Mining, Aust. Possibly the richest of Qld's uranium sites, in the Leichardt River catchment. Also other deposits nearby at Bikini Pile and Red Alpha. The government's Regional Natural Resource Plan for Southern Gulf of Carpentaria identifies water as a crucial issue for the region. Summit Resources claim Valhalla to have potential similar to the Olympic Dam mine in South Australia. Demand for water in the region would double if Valhalla were even half the capacity of the Olympic Dam mine.

### Ardmore/Black Sunday

Location: 80km SE of Mt Isa. Owned by: U308, West Perth WA

### Amethyst Castle & Three Amigos

Location: 7km N of Selwyn Mill, 100km S of Cloncurry  
Owner: Ivanhoe Mines, Canada. Chairman Robert Friedland has been associated with a number of questionable business and environmental practices including the biggest cyanide leak in US history at Summitville, Colorado. In April 2006, protestors in Mongolia burnt an effigy of Friedman in response to Ivanhoe's dubious deals over the Oyu Tolgoi copper and gold deposit in the Gobi Desert. Amethyst Castle is in the Cloncurry River catchment. The region is home to the only known distribution of the "Macgillivayi" race of the Australian Ringneck parrot.

### Maureen, Trident & Twoges

Location: 45km N Georgetown. Owned by: Mega Uranium Ltd. Maureen & Twoges are in the Gilbert & Einasleigh River catchments. The Georgetown region and north is the only remaining population of the endangered Golden-shouldered Parrot *Psephthus chrysopterygius*.

### Oasis

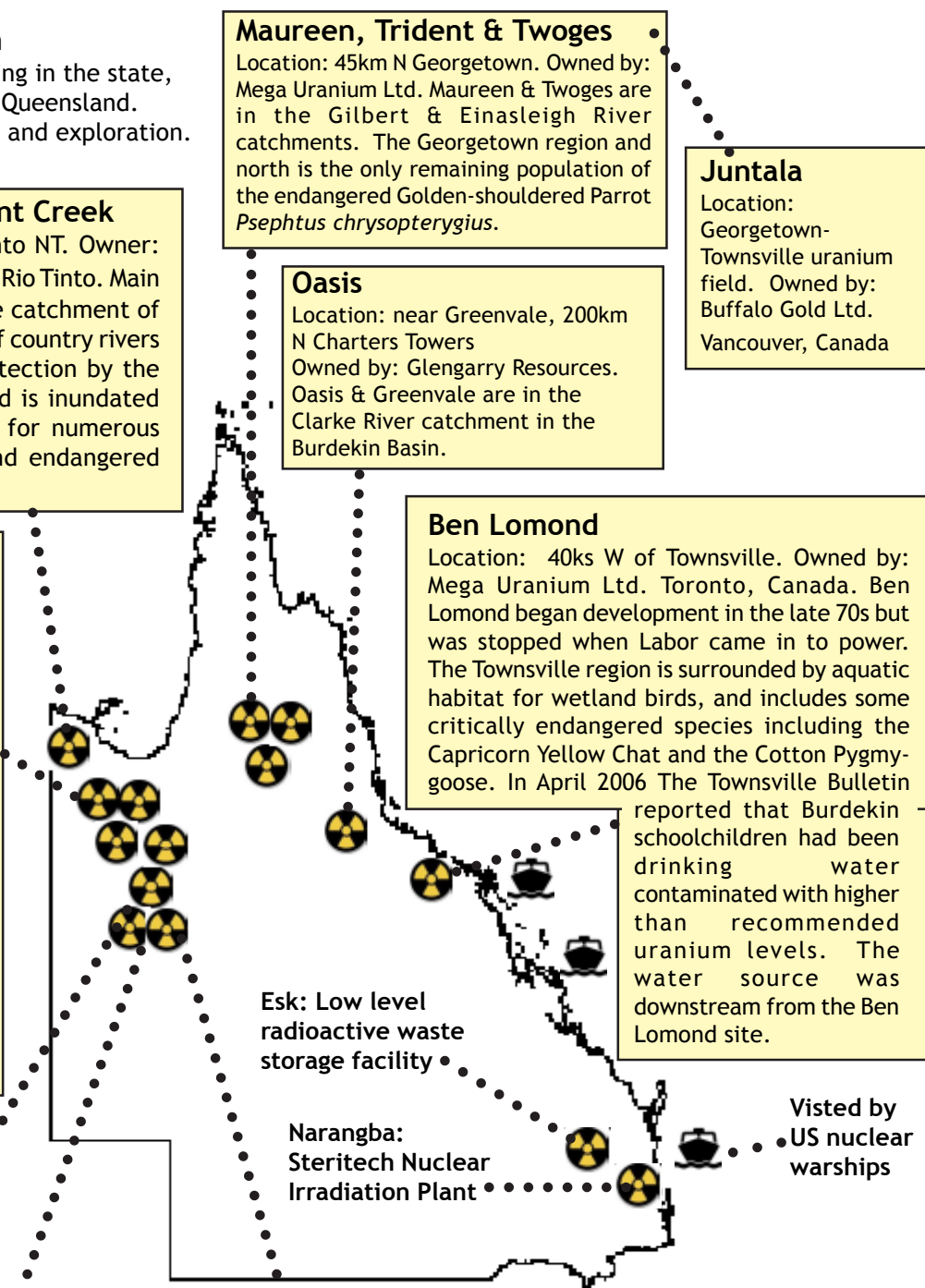
Location: near Greenvale, 200km N Charters Towers  
Owned by: Glengarry Resources. Oasis & Greenvale are in the Clarke River catchment in the Burdekin Basin.

### Ben Lomond

Location: 40ks W of Townsville. Owned by: Mega Uranium Ltd. Toronto, Canada. Ben Lomond began development in the late 70s but was stopped when Labor came in to power. The Townsville region is surrounded by aquatic habitat for wetland birds, and includes some critically endangered species including the Capricorn Yellow Chat and the Cotton Pygmy-goose. In April 2006 The Townsville Bulletin reported that Burdekin schoolchildren had been drinking water contaminated with higher than recommended uranium levels. The water source was downstream from the Ben Lomond site.

### Juntala

Location: Georgetown-Townsville uranium field. Owned by: Buffalo Gold Ltd. Vancouver, Canada



Esk: Low level radioactive waste storage facility

Narangba: Steritech Nuclear Irradiation Plant

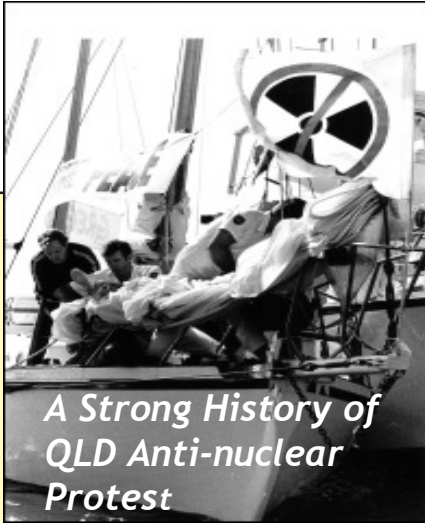
Visted by US nuclear warships

### Mary Kathleen

Location: 50km W Mt Isa. Indigenous locals: Kalkadoon. Owned by: formerly Rio Tinto, now owned by Matrix Metals, Perth. Queensland's only existing uranium mine closed in 1982. Uranium from the now defunct MK mine was used in British nuclear weapons. During it's operation from 1958, Mary Kathleen Uranium (MKU) had a checkered and controversial history. A December 2005 newsletter of the Qld Dept of Natural Resources and Mines reports that Matrix Metals have discovered new uranium deposits near MK at White Range, McCabe, Vulcan and Leonie.

## Nuclear irradiation and food irradiation

Queensland is home to one of Australia's three commercial nuclear irradiation plants. The plant, owned by Steritech Pty Ltd, is located in the Narangba Industrial Estate in Deception Bay and Narangba, 30 minutes north of Brisbane.



**A Strong History of QLD Anti-nuclear Protest**

The plant uses gamma radiation from Cobalt-60 imported from Canada to irradiate

**1963** anti-nuclear base protest in Fortitude Valley permitted by police to allow only one person to wear a shirt with the words 'no nuclear bases in Australia' on it  
**1964** Qld women organised the Aldermaston Relay Walk from Ipswich to Brisbane to highlight the main target areas in Brisbane in case of nuclear war. Anger was also directed towards the mining and export of uranium in Australia which fed nuclear projects overseas.

**1976** A national one day railway strike was held by the union movement to protest against the mining of uranium at Mary Kathleen in Queensland.

**1976** 30 protestors with union support blockaded Townsville port preventing shipment of MK uranium from being loaded

**1976, 1980, present** Qld Conservation Council steps up its campaign against nuclear power, uranium mining

**1977** Federal govt props up failing MK mine (losing \$ due to delays caused by protest) with \$12 grant and causes further widespread protest in parliament

**1977** laws against 'political' marches were passed, clearly in an attempt to subdue the anti-uranium movement

**1978** 200 people demonstrate in Mt Isa against Mary Kathleen mine

**1982** Queensland mining warden refuses permits for the Ben Lomond uranium mine, effectively stopping the development of the project.

**1982** FoE organised Cycle for a Nuclear-free Future visits Brisbane

**1983** Qld women joined the Pine Gap Women's Peace Camp

**1987** Qld Police ram Greenpeace yacht the Vega, protesting nuclear war ships, and arrest the seven crew. They are threatened with seven years imprisonment.

**1996** Brisbane declared a Nuclear Free Zone by Lord Mayor Jim Soorley

**2002** Local residents stage an 8 month protest camp outside the construction site of a nuclear irradiation plant in Narangba, north of Brisbane.

**2003** Peace flotilla protests US nuclear sub in Port of Brisbane

**2005** Peace activists and the Vega protest at Shoalwater Bay, Yeppoon and Rockhampton over US-Aust war games, nuclear war ships potential of DU use on the site

**2006** Brisbane flotilla protest nuclear warship USS Ronald Reagan

**EVERY YEAR** Rally for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament, Palm Sunday

products, including food. In 2006, mangoes irradiated at the Narangba nuclear irradiation plant were illegally sold without labelling or signage in fruit shops in New Zealand.

## Weapons, Military Bases, Exercises and Nuclear Ship Visits

**Bases and exercises:** Shoalwater Bay, 40ks north of Rockhampton is set to house one of three new Australia - US joint training facilities (the others are at Bradshaw and Delamere Range NT). These joint training facilities are the sites for joint military exercises, such as Operation Talisman Sabre 2005 and 2007. Military ships entering Australian territory for these exercises may carry nuclear weapons and some are nuclear powered. Joint military exercises practice nuclear-capable warfare.

### Depleted Uranium Alert!

The US military now carries "depleted uranium" (DU) munitions as standard armaments in its outfits. Australia has its own arsenal of DU weapons - their use has not been publicly disclosed. The US Navy will neither confirm nor deny the presence of nuclear weapons on its ships. Informed observers say that many vessels visiting Australian ports do carry nuclear weapons.



**Queenslanders resist the nuclear industry in all its guises. The only final solution to the nuclear cycle is to ban uranium mining and all its products.**



Friends of the Earth

Nuclear Free Queensland is an initiative of  
The Queensland Nuclear Free Alliance  
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