

Premier Jay Weatherill

Sunday, 8 February, 2015

Royal Commission to look at SA's nuclear industry potential

A Royal Commission will be established to allow South Australians to consider what role our State can and should play in the fuel cycle for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Premier Jay Weatherill said the establishment of a Royal Commission would create the foundations for a considered and informed discussion with the community.

“The Royal Commission will be the first of its kind in the nation and will explore the opportunities and risks of South Australia’s involvement in the mining, enrichment, energy and storage phases for the peaceful use of nuclear energy,” he said.

“Royal Commissions are a trusted and reliable means to establish the facts with which the people of South Australia can engage in this important debate.

“We are home to one of the largest uranium deposits in the world and after more than 25 years of uranium production, it is now time to engage in a mature and robust conversation about South Australia’s future role in the nuclear industry.”

Mr Weatherill said a number of independent experts would also be engaged to assist the work of the Royal Commission.

“We need a clearer understanding of the world’s demand and use of nuclear energy,” he said.

“We also need a deeper understanding of our State’s and the nation’s energy needs and how they are likely to develop in the future.

“This Royal Commission will also look at the opportunities and risks associated with this sector.

“Some people describe the potential economic benefits as enormous while others describe the risks as unacceptable.

“We believe South Australians should be given the opportunity to explore the practical, financial and ethical issues raised by a deeper involvement in the nuclear industries.

“We need to understand all these issues so that the community can make an informed judgement.”

Consultation on the form of the Terms of Reference will begin tomorrow.

The appointment of the Royal Commissioner will be made soon.