

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



A safer source of nuclear energy?

A free public lecture tomorrow night will examine a possible safer and cleaner alternative to nuclear energy.

Associate Professor Reza Hashemi-Nezhad is the leader of the Applied Nuclear Science group in the University of Sydney School of Physics.

He will deliver the lecture *Thorium fuel- a safe and cleaner source of nuclear energy*.

“There is an urgent need for new ways of electric power production free of greenhouse gases. At present, nuclear energy is the only established option,” he said.

“But use of uranium fuel in nuclear power plants has many disadvantages.”

Assoc Prof Hashemi-Nezhad said a naturally-occurring radioactive chemical element called thorium could be the answer.

“A Thorium Burning Accelerator Driven Subcritical Nuclear Reactor (ADS NR) could be a good solution.

He said some of the positives are that reactors cannot melt-down, reserves of thorium are almost inexhaustible and costs are expected to be lower.

Other important advantages are that diversion to military use is very difficult and there is minimal production of long lived radioactive waste.

“ADS NRs can even be used to incinerate radioactive waste” he said.

“If an ADS NR is fuelled with material, developed from natural thorium, it can provide the world with an almost unlimited amount of clean and cheap energy.

“The known thorium reserves of Australia are 300,000 tones,” he said.

“This could provide Australia's electricity needs for about 10,000 years at today's consumption rate.”

Who: Associate Professor Reza Hashemi-Nezhad University of Sydney.

Where: Stanley Burbury Theatre, UTAS Sandy Bay Campus

When: Wednesday, 26 October 2011, 8PM.

This lecture is supported by the UTAS School of Mathematics and Physics and the Tasmanian Branch of the Australian Institute of Physics.

Information Released by:

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