

Uranium to Russia

FOREIGN Affairs Minister Alexander Downer yesterday revealed Australia may soon be selling uranium to Russia.

Talks this week centred on a 1990 deal where Australian uranium was processed in Russia by third parties, but Russia could not use Australian supplies.

"The proposed new agreement would allow Australian uranium producers to supply Russia's nuclear power industry," Mr Downer said.

Howard clears nuclear path

From Page 1

Mr Howard will today declare the removal of federal constraints on uranium mining, particularly by streamlining a complex web of regulations relating to mining operations and the transport of uranium oxide or yellowcake.

Australia will immediately join an international group developing designs for so-called Generation Four nuclear reactors.

The Melbourne-based Uranium Information Centre says these reactors are hoped to be a clean, safe and cost-effective means of meet-

ing increased energy demands on a sustainable basis, while also being secure from terrorist attacks.

In an address to the Victorian Liberal State Council in Melbourne today, Mr Howard will spell out plans to develop a skills and technical training package for workers in a new nuclear energy industry.

Mr Howard's plans for a nuclear future reflect the recommendations of last year's Federal Government nuclear taskforce report.

The Government is expected to embrace a carbon trading system after it receives a report on the

issue late next month. This would effectively add to the cost of emissions from high-carbon fuels and would make nuclear power competitive with other electricity sources, the report says.

The nuclear taskforce report found "nuclear power has a much lower greenhouse signature than Australia's current major energy sources for electricity, namely brown and black coal and gas".

"Although the priority for Australia will continue to be to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from coal and gas, the review sees nuclear

power as a practical option for part of Australia's electricity production," the report said.

"The earliest that nuclear electricity could be delivered to the grid would be 10 years, with 15 years more probable.

"In one scenario, deployment of nuclear power starting in 2020 could see 25 reactors producing about a third of the nation's electricity by 2050 (a position already surpassed by France, South Korea, Sweden, Belgium, Bulgaria and Hungary, among others)."