

## Prime Minister rejects waste return

*Australia will not take waste from its fuel and rightly so.*

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THE Prime Minister, John Howard, has put an end to days of politically damaging speculation by ruling out Australia taking nuclear waste from countries to which it exported uranium.

Mr Howard yesterday said a US proposal known as "nuclear leasing" meant countries that provided the nuclear fuel for nuclear power, not the uranium from which the fuel was made, would take responsibility for the waste.

"If we sell uranium to another country, that is quite separate from providing nuclear fuel," he said. "Nuclear fuel is not uranium. Uranium is the raw material. It's like bauxite to alumina."

The US President has proposed nuclear leasing as part of his global nuclear energy partnership.

The five approved nuclear countries and fuel providers – the US, Russia, China, France, and Britain, as well as Japan, would accept the waste back.

Mr Howard said if Australia were to ever embrace nuclear power, it would most likely produce its own fuel from its own uranium and, hence, manage its own waste. While he did not want to discourage domestic debate on nuclear power, he said it was a long way down the track.