

# Herald Sun

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## Top End warning over nuclear reactor fallout

- By staff writers
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**THE Top End is in danger of being devastated by a nuclear fallout cloud should Indonesian reactors melt down, computer modelling shows.**

The Australian National University's Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies working paper shows there is "substantial risk" for the whole of northern Australia - particularly during the monsoon months, **the *NT News* said** ([http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2011/04/05/222431\\_ntnews.html](http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2011/04/05/222431_ntnews.html)).

The paper, done by atmospheric scientist Dr John Taylor, shows the noxious cloud of radioactive gases would reach us here in "only a few days".

"If there's a release, then the release will most likely impact Australia depending on the time of year and the meteorological conditions when it occurs," he said.

"It depends on the specific event as to how severe the impacts would be and how long-lasting. In a worst-case scenario, the impacts could be quite long-lasting."

Dr Taylor's report was done in 1996 based on a power plant that was planned to be built in Java, but he said this week the conclusions were still valid.

**To see the computer modelling in action, visit the *NT News*** ([http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2011/04/05/222431\\_ntnews.html](http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2011/04/05/222431_ntnews.html)).

The Indonesian Government is now planning to build four nuclear reactors on Bangka Island - near a volatile fault line - by 2022 to boost the nation's energy supplies.

The island is off the Sumatran coast where a 2004 tsunami killed about 230,000 people across the region.

Indonesia, like Japan, sits on the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire - an area where a large number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions happen.

But the Indonesian Government this month said Japan's unfolding nuclear crisis - sparked by a gigantic earthquake - would not deter its plans. The country's nuclear energy agency told *The Australian* its plant would use technology that was 40 years more advanced than Japan's stricken Fukushima plant.

Dr Taylor's modelling took a sample year's worth of wind-flow-pattern data that was consistent with long-term average wind patterns. The paper concluded even only a small release of radioactive gases could be "devastating" for northern Australia.

"Model runs have demonstrated that northern Australia, including the north of Western Australia, the Northern Territory and Queensland would be at substantial risk of receiving radioactive fallout, particularly during the summer months," the paper reads.

"Potential impacts on northern Australia of even a small release could potentially be devastating to agricultural production and tourism."

Dr Taylor's paper said a regional approach was needed in decisions on nuclear power reactors in South-East Asia.

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[\(\[http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2011/04/05/222431\\\_ntnews.html\]\(http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2011/04/05/222431\_ntnews.html\)\)](http://www.ntnews.com.au/article/2011/04/05/222431_ntnews.html).

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