



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION
FEDERAL MEMBER FOR DICKSON**

STATEMENT – NUCLEAR ENERGY

Today, I initiated a formal internal process to examine the potential for advanced and next-generation nuclear technologies to contribute to Australia’s energy security and reduce power prices.

This review will be led by Mr Ted O’Brien MP, Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy, who will report to the Coalition policy committee, chaired by Senator the Hon Marise Payne, and the Coalition party room.

It is high time that Australia had an honest and informed debate on the benefits and costs of nuclear energy.

The current energy crisis has shown the importance of getting more dispatchable power into the grid. The average wholesale electricity price in the second quarter this year was three times higher than the same time a year ago – a situation described by the Australian Energy Market Operator as ‘unprecedented’.

While renewables will play an important growing role in Australia’s energy mix, they need to be balanced by sufficient investment in dispatchable generation. That is why the Coalition, when in office, supported projects like the Hunter Power Project.

Sixty percent of the capacity of our coal-fired generators is expected to leave the market by 2030. This will leave Australian households and businesses vulnerable to a re-run of the chaos we are now seeing under Labor.

If we are serious about reducing emissions, while at the same time maintaining a strong economy and protecting our traditional industries, all technologies need to be on the table.

Nuclear energy is a mature, proven technology. It can provide the reliable, emissions-free, base-load electricity Australia needs. Estimates show that it would cost the world USD \$1.6 trillion more to meet the Paris targets without nuclear energy.

Australia is already a nuclear nation. The Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation has operated a nuclear research reactor at Lucas Heights for over 60 years. A national conversation about potential of nuclear energy is the logical next step.

Many of Australia's international partners, including France, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and the United States of America, have adopted nuclear energy technologies. The UK Government, for example, has outlined plans to triple the size of its nuclear generation by 2050, providing 25 percent of its projected energy demand.

The Coalition will show Australians that we are prepared to undertake this honest and informed debate, which has eluded our country for too long.

2 August 2022