

Media release

Pathway to nuclear energy

Statement from Tania Constable, Chief Executive Officer

The release of the report by the House of Representatives Standing Committee on the Environment and Energy of its report 'Not without your approval: a way forward for nuclear technology in Australia' is an important step in the overdue and rigorous assessment of nuclear power in Australia.

The report identifies a clear pathway for Australia to properly consider nuclear energy by addressing knowledge gaps in Australia about this important energy source. Importantly, it acknowledges the critical role for community engagement on what is a contentious policy and political issue.

Despite being the only energy source capable of providing safe, low cost, zero emission baseload power – which provides 10 per cent of the world's electricity and 75 per cent in countries like France – nuclear energy has been banned in Australia for the past 20 years.

By focusing on evolving technologies like Small Modular Reactors which will emerge within the next decade, the report outlines what is needed for Australia to take advantage of an important energy source capable of meeting the energy needs of Australian industry and households.

As the MCA has strongly advocated, SMRs should be considered as a potential replacement for retiring coal baseload plants. Not only are they capable of complementing intermittent power sources, they can safely meet large-scale industrial demand for affordable and reliable power.

More broadly, the current bans mean Australia – with the world's largest deposits of uranium – is missing out on a potential industry which could employ tens of thousands of Australians with high paying jobs, mostly in regional areas.

The relentless and baseless scare campaign waged against nuclear power for the past forty years is fundamentally anti-scientific. This campaign is also at odds with the recognition by the International Panel on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency of the importance of nuclear power in reducing emissions in a world where the energy demand is increasing.

That's why the MCA welcomes the pragmatic and methodical approach outlined in the report, which would help all Australians better understand the role nuclear power should play in Australia's energy future.

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