

Submission to the Environment and Communications Legislation Committee

Submission to the Inquiry into the *Environment and
Other Legislation Amendment (Removing Nuclear
Energy Prohibitions) Bill 2022*

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About Fusion

Fusion is a registered political party that was formed in 2021 through an amalgamation of the Science Party, Pirate Party, Secular Party, Vote Planet, and Climate Change Justice Party.

We represent over 1500 members who are deeply concerned about Australian energy and environmental policy, and want to see us move into a prosperous and fair future.

Fusion thanks the committee for the opportunity to make this submission.

Our position

Fusion supports the proposed removal of legislative prohibitions on the use of nuclear energy in the *Environment and Other Legislation Amendment (Removing Nuclear Energy Prohibitions) Bill 2022*.

Our party's position is that the current prohibition on nuclear energy unnecessarily restricts Australia's ability to conduct research and development in this field and our nation's future energy options.

Our Justification

Social licence

Recent polling¹ suggests that the existing prohibition no longer has the same social licence it once had, with the majority of Australians supporting removal of the ban.

The Fusion party remains unconvinced that nuclear fission is required to achieve our domestic medium term clean energy goals. Our support for repealing the ban should not be read as support for public funding of nuclear fission projects. However, the potential expense of building nuclear fission generation infrastructure is not a reason to ban the energy source.

¹ <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/potential-federal-government-policies-on-climate-change>

Nuclear fusion research suffers under the ban

The Fusion party advocates for Australia to join international research efforts into harnessing nuclear fusion energy. Although we are able to participate in research into some aspects of this exciting prospective energy source, practical experimentation may be disallowed in Australia under current legislation. This is a compelling reason to lift the prohibition.

Nuclear safety

Nuclear power is one of the safest forms of energy available, on par with solar and wind, and significantly safer than fossil fuels².

To give further reassurance about the safety of any nuclear power developments, we recommend:

- Clarifying that the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency (ARPANSA) would be responsible for regulating any nuclear power installations;
- Ensuring that ARPANSA is properly resourced to maintain nuclear safety;
- Reviewing relevant legislation to ensure that any nuclear power installation that would prejudice national security is disallowed; and
- That Australia reaffirms its commitment to nuclear non-proliferation.

Conclusion

The legality of nuclear power in Australia is locked in a culture war struggle which harms our national interest. The ban should be reexamined on its merits; while we believe the ban was well-intentioned, it does not serve the interests of the Australian public today.

² <https://ourworldindata.org/safest-sources-of-energy>

