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## **NUCLEAR ENERGY: UNLOCKING A RELIABLE PATHWAY TO NET ZERO**

The South Australian Chamber of Mines & Energy (SACOME) welcomes the introduction of the Environment and Other Legislation Amendment (Removing Nuclear Energy Prohibitions) Bill 2022 introduced into the Senate on 28 September 2022 by Senator Matt Canavan.

The Bill would remove the existing Nuclear Energy Prohibitions that are currently in place under Federal Legislation by amending the Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Act 1998 and the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999.

SACOME CEO, Rebecca Knol, said "The introduction of the Bill was a positive step to progressing an informed and balanced conversation on nuclear energy."

"Modern nuclear energy offers a zero-emissions energy source with the ability to provide safe, affordable, and reliable and dispatchable baseload power in extremely large quantities. It provides the opportunity to partner with renewables to help Australia meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement," she said.

"Meeting Net Zero at the speed and scale required cannot be achieved with renewables alone. All low-emission technologies, including nuclear, should be considered as part of the future energy mix."

"To date, nuclear energy has been routinely excluded in Australia as both an emissions reduction and energy solution. The rest of the world is embracing modern nuclear technologies while Australia remains the only G20 nation with a legislative prohibition on nuclear power," she added.

James Fleay, CEO of Down Under Nuclear Energy, said "The inclusion of nuclear power in Australia's energy mix is a question of when; not if."

"Senator Canavan's Bill is a small but important step towards a future that includes emissions free nuclear energy as part of a sensible and complementary energy mix which balances affordability for households and businesses with reliable electricity supply and emissions commitments. Nuclear energy must be a key contributor to a practical, sensible, and de-risked energy transition," James said.

The Bill would incentivise industry to take the lead and allow global entrepreneurs and innovators to develop and commercialise nuclear energy designs and technology in Australia, with the prospect of possible deployment in Australia's energy system in the future. Any approved nuclear projects would still need to meet Australia's stringent environment and safety requirements.

Helen Cook, Principal of GNE Advisory, and an expert in nuclear energy law, said, "Countries around the world, including many in our region, have recognized the contribution that nuclear energy makes to decarbonised and secure energy systems."

"Australia already has a world-leading reputation when it comes to our existing legal and regulatory requirements around nuclear safeguards and nuclear security. We have a nuclear research reactor operated by ANSTO and we export our uranium to fuel other nations' nuclear power plants."

"Lifting the prohibition would signal that Australia is ready to engage in a responsible examination of the opportunity that nuclear energy presents our country," Helen said.

### **Opportunity for South Australia**

A recent SACOME-commissioned poll, conducted in July 2022, identified that 75% of South Australian's surveyed support an informed and balanced conversation around developing a nuclear energy industry in South Australia; more than six in ten adults (63%) agree that, given recent cost and reliability issues of the Australian electricity market, all energy sources, including nuclear, should be on the table for consideration.

"Coupling modern nuclear technology with South Australia's abundant energy sources would facilitate rapid decarbonisation while providing huge economic benefits for our State," said SACOME CEO Rebecca Knol.

South Australia is a world class uranium province, hosting 25% of the world's uranium resources and 80% of Australia's uranium. The State is also home to the world's largest known single deposit of uranium at Olympic Dam and hosts one of the only ports in the nation approved for the export of uranium products with a well-developed regulatory regime governing the uranium supply chain.

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### **Media contact:**

Naomi Marsh | SACOME | Director, Strategic Policy Communications | 0418 897 831

### **South Australian Chamber of Mines & Energy**

Level 3, 115 King William Street, Adelaide, SA 5000 | +61 8 8202 9999 | [sacome@sacome.org.au](mailto:sacome@sacome.org.au) | [www.sacome.org.au](http://www.sacome.org.au)