

28 June 2023

SACOME welcomes Opposition Leader David Speirs' comments on Nuclear Energy

The South Australian Chamber of Mines & Energy (SACOME) welcomes comments made by the Opposition Leader, the Hon. David Speirs MP, in Parliament on nuclear energy as a source of affordable and reliable energy.

In his State Budget reply speech, the Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Minister for Environment, said governments need to keep an open mind with regard to all energy solutions available in Australia and that *"it may very well be that consideration of nuclear energy in some form, likely small modular reactors, will be necessary."*

Mr Speirs went on to say that *"Perhaps it's time to reopen that Royal Commission – have a Royal Commission 2.0 – and start thinking about what South Australia's role could be in that fuel cycle, some seven years since we last considered it."*

In 2015, a Royal Commission was conducted into South Australia's future role in the Nuclear Fuel Cycle. The Commission, led by former South Australian Governor Kevin Scarce, [delivered its final report in May 2016](#) and recommended that the South Australian Government **"pursue removal at the federal level of existing prohibitions on nuclear power generation to allow it to contribute to a low-carbon electricity system, if required."**

Since the Commission, no Government in South Australia has pursued this recommendation.

SACOME CEO, Rebecca Knol, said the comments from the Opposition Leader were welcomed and timely given the State continues to grapple with escalating electricity prices and a huge energy transition challenge, despite unparalleled renewables penetration.

"Nuclear is a safe, reliable and affordable energy source, capable of generating baseload power with zero emissions," Rebecca said.

"Coupling modern Small Modular Reactor (SMR) technology, with the State's abundant uranium, natural gas and renewable energy sources, would facilitate rapid decarbonisation and ensure South Australians have access to dependable and affordable power."

"The findings from the Royal Commission still stand today. The Government needs to act in pursuit of overturning the Federal prohibition to enable it to be explored as part of our future energy mix if we are to protect manufacturing and jobs."

South Australian Chamber of Mines & Energy

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"SACOME has consistently called for an Energy Transition Plan. Seven years into the energy transition, South Australia remains without a plan and has the highest electricity prices in the nation."

"Australia is the only G20 nation that is not using or considering nuclear energy due to a Federal legislative prohibition. South Australia hosts 25% of the world's uranium which we export around the world, enabling other countries to meet their decarbonisation targets, just not our own."

"An amendment to the Federal Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 – the removal of four words 'a nuclear power plant' – would allow industry to explore nuclear as part of South Australia's energy mix."

"Bipartisan effort is needed across election-cycles to enable fact-based policy development on nuclear energy. We already have bipartisan support for nuclear powered submarines and uranium mining in our State. We now need bipartisan support for nuclear power to deliver a Net Zero future, reduce energy prices and maintain South Australian manufacturing and jobs."

In 2022, SACOME commissioned a community sentiment survey of 600 South Australians to evaluate the views of the public and see if they were open to a balanced conversation on nuclear energy. The survey found that 75% of South Australians support having an *"informed and balanced conversation about having a nuclear energy industry in South Australia"*.

58% also support progressing the necessary political conversations and legislative frameworks to enable future nuclear energy use in South Australia, while more than 6 in 10 adults 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.

To learn more about nuclear energy visit: www.sacome.org.au/nuclearenergy

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About SACOME

The [South Australian Chamber of Mines and Energy](http://www.sacome.org.au) is the peak industry association representing companies with interests and connections to the South Australian resources and energy sector.

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