



Newsletter Extra

Number 21 November 2025

Nationals “No Net Zero” Plan

The Nationals have just released their “no net zero” plan so what does it all mean? This “extra” edition is coming out early to give you some more information about it, beyond the sound bites and slogans of the daily political doorstops.

Information Sources

Their formal web site – [Powering Australia First](#) – has just been released. This is meant to be the “retail” version of their plan but has no explanatory content, just a series of misleading claims and “farmers are being ruined” claims. You need to download their plan document for any details.

Actually, the plan is from the [Page Research Centre](#) and is called the [High Energy Plan For Australia](#); the one that was recently presented to the Party room for their debate. That report is what I will be dissecting here, referring as needed to any reports referred to by the Page report. You can get the gist of the plan by reading the 3-page Executive Summary.

Guiding Principles of the Plan

- **Lower energy prices first:** Energy policy should prioritise reducing prices for households and businesses [over] arbitrary emissions targets.
- **Do our fair share:** Australia produces just 1% of the world’s emissions. We should reduce emissions in line with comparable nations, not ahead of them.
- **Share the burden equally:** The cost ... should be distributed evenly, not concentrated on regional industries or low-income households.
- **Empower local action:** Local communities should be able to lead initiatives such as waterway protection, land restoration, soil carbon and carbon capture projects to deliver jobs and stewardship across Australia.
- **Back innovation and support all technologies:** A commonsense approach to renewables must be the priority. This means using solar panels where they make economic and practical sense, such as in commercial and industrial precincts and not across our pristine landscapes or prime agricultural land. It also means embracing new technologies, including

nuclear energy and advanced coal and gas power stations.

- **Protect our security and prosperity:** There can be no compromise on our quality of life, regional jobs and industries and national security and defence. (more on this later)

Analysis – Unpacking Their Reasons

I’m not going to address these in detail as they are often deceptive, misleading or wrong. But, before we look behind it to their true intentions, there are a few that deserve attention.

Ahead of the pack: The Nats posit a narrative that our emissions reductions are ahead of others (true) and that is unfair. However, we emit three times as much per capita as the OECD, and that doesn’t even include the scope 3 emissions and the wealth we make from exporting emissions via coal and gas. So, we have an intense moral (and now, legal) obligation to reduce that to be not “streaking ahead” in emissions. The only “doing more than our fair share” we are doing is contributing to global warming. If we met a benchmark that of polluting the same as the global average today, we would need a 66% reduction in emissions.

2-9m tonnes reduction per year is what they believe is a fair goal to reach a 30-40% reduction by 2035 (never mind that we are on track to just about get to 43% by 2030). At that rate, reducing our current 446m tonnes of CO₂e ([ABS](#)) will take us 250 to 50 years. In other words, net zero by 2075 or way beyond! That will have massive reputational and economic damage to Australia’s global standing.

Cost of net zero is \$9 trillion. No, that figure was for the total cost over 35 years of transforming our economy away from fossil fuel dependence and exposure, towards new forms of energy¹.

All our problems are due to net zero efforts. The cost increases in electricity prices, job losses, the world is pivoting away from net zero – all not true¹.

Reaching net zero emissions would cost jobs. False; Net Zero Australia modelling found an extra 550,000 jobs would be created in the net zero energy sector¹.

¹ [Littleproud says the world is ‘re-pivoting’ on net zero commitments – but is that just spin?](#) (Guardian, 04Nov)



Newsletter Extra

Number 21 November 2025

Plan for “Lower energy prices first”

OK, forget all the claims and counter-claims, here is the core of what they plan to do:

- **refurbish existing coal plants** for another 20 years at a cost of over \$20 billion² but without CCS³;
- build **new coal-fired UCS⁴ power** stations (no CCS);
- roll out **nuclear power**.

All of this seems pretty much in line with the nuclear plan they took to the last election. The **key problems** with this “new” plan include:

- Will there be any coal-fired plants operating by the earliest time they could win power (2034 anyone?) to start the refurbishing work? It would take until early 2040's to get most of them back on-line, if that is even possible.
- No CCS means ongoing emissions for decades, probably exceeding the estimated **2 billion tonnes of new emissions** projected for the nuclear plan (since they expect these coal plants to operate for 50+ years). It is difficult to see how anyone could achieve the social licence to burn coal with that level of emissions.
- They claim (p.27) that new-build USC coal-fired power stations can deliver power at A\$85/MWh on a "long-run marginal cost" basis (ie once financing costs have been recovered). Those finance costs still need to be recovered over the first 10-15 years, making that figure much higher. They also ignore the long-run marginal cost of adding CCS which doubles that \$85 figure.
- If they build, for example, 25Gw of baseload new-build coal, **where will nuclear fit** and what will happen to their “long run marginal costs” if it displaces them? Note that 25Gw of new-build coal would cost \$62-117 billion using their figures or \$144 billion using CSIRO GenCost 2025 figures.
- They have not done any **economic modelling** of the cost of dumping the target⁵. So, they cannot say if it really will be cheaper, can they?

Editorial

OK, enough of matching their facts and statements to

² They claim \$10 billion but their own reference from [Arche Energy](#) shows that is for a 10-year life extension.

³ Carbon Capture and Storage to ensure no new emissions.

other information; time for a political assessment.

This is about one thing only – supporting the fossil fuel industry that funds them. Keeping coal-fired power stations open, building new ones and implementing nuclear power and bugger the environmental cost. The rest is window dressing.

Don't fall for their “we believe in climate change” line; how can they when they want to commit this environmental vandalism?

Politically, they have probably just alienated half their regional base, all of any metropolitan swinging voters and anyone under 30. Not to mention their tail wagging the Liberal dog so that the Coalition has the choice of kowtowing to the Nationals or fatally damaging their credibility.

And how about their “no compromise” principle 6 for a moral and ethical vacuum? Really? You are not prepared to compromise your emissions-intensive profligate lifestyle to save the planet? What sort of selfish person are you? What will you tell your grandchildren when they ask you what did you change to save the planet. Shame on you!

And shame on **Darren Chester** too for claiming it will lower emissions, lower power prices and create secure jobs. Easy to say Darren when you refuse to debate anything to do with emissions and energy with your constituents.

The only good thing about this mess is that it is hard to see how any Coalition MP could genuinely believe they could win Government before the 2031 election. That pushes any possible implementation of their plan out to 2040 and beyond.

About Us

WelCAN is a group of Wellington Shire residents determined to accelerate the pace and direction of action on climate change at all Government levels. For more information, email info@welcan.org.au or call me on 0419 309 158. Note: Any opinions herein are mine and are not necessarily endorsed by WelCAN. John Gwyther, editor.

⁴ Ultra-supercritical coal generation plant ([Wiki](#))

⁵ [Nationals' net zero review has not undertaken economic modelling](#) (ABC News, 26Oct25)