

NUCLEAR POWER CAN'T SAVE THE CLIMATE

**DON'T NUKE the  
CLIMATE**



---

# Questions for Liberal and National Candidates about their **NUCLEAR POWER PLAN**

Opposition Leader Peter Dutton and the federal Coalition plan to use public money to build nuclear power plants at seven sites around Australia if they win the May 3 federal election.

Little detail has been released and the Coalition has been avoiding key questions and issues.

**Here are some questions across a range of themes that you might ask the Coalition candidate in your electorate.**

If you receive an answer, please share it with

[dontnuketheclimate@protonmail.com](mailto:dontnuketheclimate@protonmail.com)



---

## **Nuclear Disasters**

Do you agree with Dr. Ziggy Switkowski, who led a nuclear power inquiry under the Howard government in 2006, that the introduction of nuclear power to Australia would result in a “[non-negligible](#)” risk of a nuclear catastrophe?

Can you confirm that evacuations after the Fukushima and Chernobyl disasters extended [beyond 30 kms](#)?

Can you confirm that [33 hospitals and medical centres](#) are located within 30 kms of the seven proposed nuclear sites? What plans does the Coalition have to evacuate these hospitals and medical centres in the event of a nuclear disaster?

---

### **MORE INFORMATION**

Don't Nuke the Climate [dont-nuke-the-climate.org.au](http://dont-nuke-the-climate.org.au)

Nuclear Plume Maps [nuclearplume.au](http://nuclearplume.au)

Friends of the Earth [nuclear.foe.org.au](http://nuclear.foe.org.au)



## Nuclear Disasters

Can you confirm that [99 schools](#) are located within 30 kms of the seven proposed nuclear sites? What plans does the Coalition have to evacuate these schools in the event of a nuclear disaster?

Can you confirm that [62 child-care centres](#) are located within 30 kms of the seven proposed nuclear sites? What plans does the Coalition have to evacuate these schools in the event of a nuclear disaster?

Can you confirm that over 160,000 people were [evacuated](#) after the Fukushima disaster and 350,000 after the Chernobyl disaster?

Where would [evacuees](#) be housed in the event of a disaster at a nuclear reactor plant in Australia? How would a Dutton Coalition government address the disproportionate impacts of a nuclear evacuation on [women and children](#)?

Are you aware that for people in the most contaminated areas following the Fukushima disaster, the World Health Organisation [states](#) that females exposed as infants face an estimated 4% increased risk for all solid cancers, a 6% increased risk of breast cancer, and a 70% increased risk of thyroid cancer while males exposed as infants face a 7% increased risk of leukemia?



## Security Risks

Are you aware of the [warning](#) of the Australian Security Leaders Climate Group that the Dutton Coalition's plan to build nuclear reactors would leave Australia [vulnerable](#) to missile warfare and sabotage?

Are you aware that retired Admiral Chris Barrie, former Chief of the Australian Defence Force, [states](#): "Every nuclear power facility is a potential dirty bomb because rupture of containment facilities can cause devastating damage. Modern warfare is increasingly focused on missiles and uncrewed aerial systems, and with the proposed power stations all located within a 100 kilometres of the coast, they are a clear and accessible target."

Are you aware that Cheryl Durrant, former Department of Defence Director of Preparedness and Mobilisation, [states](#): "In the Ukraine-Russia war, both sides have given strategic priority to targeting their opponents' energy systems, and Australia would be no different. So these nuclear facilities would necessitate expensive and complex missile defence systems as well as allocated cyber and counter-intelligence resources, making our security challenge more complex and expensive."

How would a Dutton Coalition government manage the security risks arising from its plan to build nuclear power plants across Australia? Will the costs be borne by taxpayers? How much will these costs amount to?



## Financial Risks

Can you confirm that none of Australia's electricity generators or retailers intend to develop or use nuclear power? Why is the Coalition not accepting the decision of the free market?

Can you confirm that the latest cost estimates for reactors in France, the US and the UK ranges from \$27 billion to \$46 billion per reactor? Why does the Coalition (and the Frontier Economics modelling report) assume a much lower cost than the lived experience?

Can you confirm that the \$331 billion cost of the Dutton Coalition's nuclear reactor plan will be paid by taxpayers? How much will our taxes increase?

Do you acknowledge that the financial costs of the Fukushima disaster amount to [many hundreds of billion dollars](#) - over [one trillion dollars](#) if indirect economic impacts of the disaster are included?

Can you confirm that nuclear reactor suppliers / vendors [will not accept liability](#) for the damage caused by their technology and that the astronomical costs associated with nuclear disasters are primarily foisted onto taxpayers?

Would a Dutton Coalition government require nuclear reactor vendors to accept liability for damage caused by their technology?



---

## Insurance and housing Risks

Do you acknowledge that insurance policies from many of Australia's major insurers including AAMI, CGU, Allianz, QBE and NRMA - contain specific text [excluding coverage for nuclear disasters](#) and that none of these will insure homes, cars or possessions against a nuclear accident or release?

How would a Dutton Coalition government address the insurance problem? Will Australians effected by a nuclear disaster have to sue the government for compensation for losses arising from a nuclear disaster?

Why is it that Peter Dutton and David Littleproud have [sidestepped questions](#) about nuclear insurance costs?

Do you acknowledge that housing prices have been consistently shown to [fall due to proximity to nuclear plants](#)? How would a Coalition government address that problem?



## Agricultural radiation ingestion zones

Do you acknowledge that nearly [12,000 farms](#) are located within an 80 km ingestion zone of the seven sites targeted by the Coalition for nuclear reactors?

Are you aware that a July 2024 [Joint Ministerial Statement](#) released by Agriculture Ministers of the Governments of Australia and all seven mainland states and territories notes that in similar countries, including the USA, states have produced detailed plans to manage radioactive emergencies from nuclear reactors within a similar radius of farmland (known as the “ingestion zone”)?

How would a Dutton Coalition manage the problem of contaminated radioactive ingestion zones stretching up to 80 km from the site of a nuclear disaster?



## Emergency responses to nuclear accidents

Are you aware of the [submission](#) by Emergency Leaders for Climate Action warning that nuclear reactors would introduce significant and unnecessary risk to Australian communities and emergency responders, including firefighters already stretched by escalating climate fuelled disasters?

Can you confirm that ‘Category 1 Emergency workers’ responding to a nuclear disaster could receive doses of up to 500 mSv, a dangerously high exposure 500 times the maximum annual public radiation exposure limit? Can you confirm that female workers who might be pregnant must be excluded from taking actions that might result in such high radiation exposures?



## Water

Do you accept that nuclear is the [thirstiest energy source](#) and that it requires significantly more than coal and vastly more than renewables?

What analysis of water resources did the Coalition carry out before announcing the potential seven nuclear sites in Australia?

What existing water users – agriculture, industry, environmental flows, humans – would be impacted or face possible shortages due to nuclear powers increased water demand?



## Radioactive waste

Are you aware that high-level nuclear waste from civil nuclear power reactors remains a human and environmental threat and unresolved management challenge for many thousands of years?

How does the Coalition intend to manage the radioactive wastes from its nuclear program?

Where would any future waste stores and disposal sites be located? How much will this cost and what costing analysis has the Coalition done to inform this planning?

Do you think it is either reasonable or responsible to promote a waste making activity but fail to address management of the waste?

Are you aware of Australia's long and contested history around radioactive waste and the multi-decade failure of successive governments to locate a facility site?

Do you support local communities and First Nations people's having real consent rights, including a veto right, over the location of any future radioactive waste facilities?

Do you accept the [statement](#) by the Liberals Against Nuclear group that "exploded waste would render a radius of at least tens of kilometres uninhabitable for 100,000 years"?



## Small Modular Reactors?

In March 2023, Peter Dutton said: "I don't support the establishment of big nuclear facilities here at all, I'm opposed to it." Why the about-face? What has changed in two years?

Was the about-face regarding large reactors due to the abandonment of the NuScale 'small modular reactor (SMR) project in the United States after cost estimates rose to [\\$31,000 per kilowatt](#)?

Can you confirm that NuScale - a company heavily promoted by the Dutton Coalition - is now celebrating its 21st birthday with no reactors in operation, none under construction, ongoing licensing challenges, a class-action lawsuit from shareholders, and bankruptcy looming?

Are you aware of the 2024 report by the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering that [notes](#) that no small modular reactors exist in any OECD countries and that the technology has not been proven technically or financially?

Do you acknowledge that SMRs, despite their smaller size and the fact that they are not in commercial deployment, would still risk [catastrophic accidents and widespread radioactive fallout](#)?