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## Joyce, Canavan Push Coal Over Renewables in Energy Clash

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Nationals figures Barnaby Joyce and Senator Matt Canavan have renewed calls for the construction of new coal-fired power plants, positioning the policy as an alternative to Australia's current renewable energy trajectory. On August 2, 2025, Joyce introduced a private member's bill seeking to repeal the national net zero by 2050 target, describing wind and solar energy as expensive and unreliable. He cited nuclear power and ongoing coal use in other countries as more pragmatic pathways to energy security.

Senator Canavan supported the proposal, arguing that prioritising economic stability and job preservation should take precedence over meeting global emissions benchmarks. He stated that Australia's emissions reductions have limited global impact and claimed that new coal infrastructure could help retain manufacturing capacity and reduce costs for households.

However, recent reports from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO) contradict these claims. CSIRO's 2024–25 GenCost report states that renewables, backed by gas and modern transmission systems, are the most cost-effective electricity sources for Australia's future. AEMO forecasts that Australia's last coal-fired power station is scheduled to close by 2038, warning that prolonging the life of ageing infrastructure may jeopardise grid reliability.

Former Nationals leader Michael McCormack also expressed concerns about the pace of renewable energy expansion, arguing that it threatens agricultural land. He questioned the increasing industrialisation of farmland to support large-scale wind and solar projects, highlighting the complexity of balancing energy needs with regional land use.

The renewed coal advocacy comes after the Nationals' formal split from the Liberal Party in May 2025, where nuclear energy policy became a key point of difference. Joyce's proposed bill is expected to be debated later in August, adding to the broader political discussion on energy policy, emissions targets, and regional development.

As debate over Australia's energy future continues, the proposal underscores persistent divisions within federal politics on how best to manage the transition away from fossil fuels while addressing economic and regional concerns.