

Littleproud Calls Nuclear Energy ‘Sensible’ Next Step

August 23, 2025

— Categories: General News



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Nationals Leader David Littleproud has reaffirmed his party's support for including nuclear power in Australia's energy mix, emphasizing its potential role in regional development. His remarks were delivered at the Liberal National Party annual convention in Brisbane, following a temporary split between the Nationals and Liberals over policy priorities after the May federal election.

At the convention, Mr. Littleproud outlined four major policy areas influencing the Nationals' decisions on coalition alignment. These included nuclear energy, a proposed \$20 billion Regional Australia Future Fund, government powers to regulate supermarket chains, and improved mobile coverage for regional communities.

"We have to have, as part of our energy mix, nuclear in that mix," Mr. Littleproud said. He stressed that energy infrastructure affects both food security and the environment and said a technology-neutral approach, including nuclear power, would provide balanced outcomes.

The proposed Regional Australia Future Fund is designed to support rural communities by improving access to childcare, training, and retaining regional doctors, and assisting local councils. Mr. Littleproud noted that the fund represents a fraction of the approximately \$350 billion in annual exports generated by regional Australia, highlighting its potential to strengthen local economies.

On telecommunications, he called for a universal service obligation to maintain mobile phone towers in regional areas. "Telcos have abandoned the regions, leaving people cut off," he said, emphasizing the importance of connectivity for safety and economic participation.

Regarding supermarket regulation, Mr. Littleproud advocated retaining government powers to address market dominance when chains misuse their position. "When you have market dominance, the only time government should interfere is when market power is overtaken by a few," he said.

Mr. Littleproud described the Nationals' reconciliation with the Liberal Party as amicable, noting the coalition reunited after ensuring the party's key policy priorities were addressed.

Energy policy was a central topic at the convention, with delegates passing a non-binding resolution to review the net-zero by 2050 target. While the resolution does not change Australia's commitments under the Paris Agreement, it reflects ongoing discussion about the country's energy strategy.

The 2025 LNP convention will consider 163 resolutions over three days. Queensland Premier David Crisafulli is scheduled to speak, and former opposition leader Peter Dutton made a surprise appearance, receiving recognition from colleagues.

Mr. Littleproud's remarks underline the Nationals' continued focus on practical, technology-driven solutions for energy security, regional development, and market regulation in Australia.