



Mr Ted O'Brien
Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

By email: ted.obrien.mp@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr O'Brien,

Thank you for your recent correspondence regarding the Climate Change Authority's report *Assessing the impact of a nuclear pathway on Australia's emissions*. I categorically reject your assertion that the Authority has departed from its mandate in preparing this report.

As the nation's independent climate advisory agency, the Authority's role is to provide frank and fearless advice on the solutions that can see Australia cut emissions to address climate change, and explain the risks of those that won't.

Understanding the impact on national emissions of different pathways to decarbonise Australia's grid and its economy is firmly within the Authority's remit.

Section 11(c) of the [Climate Change Authority Act 2011](#) empowers the Authority to undertake self-initiated research about matters relating to climate change. This analysis was undertaken in line with the functions and powers provided by that act.

It was not directed or requested by the Australian Government. The Authority provided a copy of the report to Office of the Minister for Climate Change and Energy on Saturday 22 February, prior to its public release, in line with our standard practice for all published work.

The analysis finds that, based on the modelling and scenarios highlighted in the Frontier Economics modelling report, pursuing the proposed nuclear pathway would see an additional 1 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide produced in the electricity sector alone to 2050. Delayed decarbonisation across the rest of the economy could blow out national emissions by at least another billion tonnes. This is consistent with a global pathway to 2.6°C, and would see Australia miss its current legislated emissions reduction target for 2030 by more than 5 percentage points.

As Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy, I would expect these facts to be of significant concern to you.

I therefore wish to understand where and how you believe the report diverges from providing evidence-based advice. Your letter does not dispute the Authority's analytical findings, which draw directly from modelling prepared by Frontier Economics. I note that work was led by Mr Danny Price, who previously served as a member of the Climate Change Authority from 2015.

If you believe there is an error in the Frontier Economics projections or the Authority's resulting analysis of these, we would be happy to revise and update this work. Please advise which aspect of these findings regarding a 2 billion tonne increase in Australia's emissions from pursuing a nuclear pathway you believe to be incorrect.



Furthermore, it is unclear from the Frontier Economics modelling whether net zero can be achieved economy-wide under the proposed nuclear pathway, given the delayed decarbonisation of Australia's grid and flow-on impacts for other sectors. To ensure the Authority is able to continue providing factual, evidence-based advice to the Australian community, I would value your clarification on this point.

I would like to invite you to meet with myself and Authority staff to discuss these matters further, and identify any factual issues that warrant further clarification.

I also note public comments by your colleagues suggesting reprisals against the Authority in the event of a change of government. This represents a very concerning threat to the Authority's independence. I seek your assurance that the conscientious scientists, economists and policy analysts who work for the Authority will be able to undertake their work without such attempts to chill their advice going forward.

Your correspondence notes: 'Australians deserve an energy debate grounded in facts, not politics'. On this we are in furious agreement; enabling this is the core rationale for the Authority's publication of this report.

Yours sincerely



The Hon. Matt Kean
Chair

25 February 2025

