

## Cost-of-living to spike under Dutton's nuclear proposal, ACTU warns

Unions warn that Opposition Leader Peter Dutton's nuclear proposal announced today will drive up power bills and worsen the cost-of-living for working people.

The seven proposed nuclear reactor sites are set to cost Australians at least \$331 billion – enough to put solar panels on every roof in Australia ten times over, and still have billions left for schools and hospitals, according to ACTU research.

The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis estimates that Dutton's nuclear proposal would increase the average Australian household's electricity bill by \$665 a year. By contrast, Australians with rooftop solar are already saving an average of \$1594 every year.

The CSIRO confirmed in their GenCost report this week that nuclear power is at least twice as expensive as renewable energy.

Dutton's proposal assumes Australia would build nuclear power plants faster than any other country has before. Even under this assumption, the first nuclear reactor would not come online until nearly every coal power plant has already shut down – leaving those workers without good quality jobs to move into, and risking years of blackouts and unreliable energy.

Public health experts have shown that the workers at nuclear power plants and nearby residents are at significantly increased risk of developing mesothelioma, thyroid cancer and circulatory disease.

At least two of Dutton's proposed nuclear reactor sites are located on active geologic faultlines, and the installation of expensive anti-seismic technology for these reactors would result in even greater cost blowouts.

A magnitude 4.7 earthquake struck Muswellbrook in the Hunter region earlier in the year, only kilometres away from Dutton's proposed nuclear site at the Liddell power station.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“Working people can't afford to see their energy bills go up \$665 every year for Peter Dutton's nuclear proposal when they're facing cost-of-living pressures.

“For the cost of Peter Dutton's nuclear proposal, every Australian household could have rooftop solar ten times over and we would still have billions left over for schools and hospitals. The Liberal Party's priorities show they are out of touch with the issues that working people care about.

“Today's announcement is a radioactive distraction that is too slow, too dangerous, and way too expensive for working people to afford.

“Unions want to make sure that no worker or community is left behind in the energy transition. Dutton's proposal is avoiding what is really needed, which is creating well-paid, safe, and secure jobs now.

“Coal communities like the Hunter need well-paid, safe, and secure jobs now – not in 20 years' time with no plan or detail. These communities want safety and stability, not meltdowns and blackouts.”

**ENDS**

**Media Contact:** Cameron Warasta 0447 159 467