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THE NATIONALS *for Regional Australia*

NEWSLETTER February 2021

Delivering what matters to rural Australians . . .

Disappointingly, but not surprisingly, it has been regional Victorians who suffer unnecessarily every time the Victorian Labor Government hits the panic button when an outbreak flares in Melbourne. But I am proud that rural and regional Victorians continue to lead by example as the nation grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why I have complete faith it will be rural and regional Victorians who step up as Australia rebuilds our economy.

Fortunately, The Nationals have a plan to support our regions and we proudly back our hard-working communities on the road to recovery. There is an abundance of resources and opportunities for regional communities to be the value-add pacesetters by focusing on the entire supply chain and not just the original raw product.

The Nationals recently released our visions for Australia's post-COVID economic recovery, titled **Manufacturing 2035** (you can find the document here: vicn.at/manufacturing-2035). It is the culmination of extensive roundtable and video teleconferences with manufacturers from across regional Australia.

An important cog in our manufacturing re-boot is the ability to generate reliable low cost energy while also reducing our emissions.

All options need to be on the table if Australia is serious about a zero emissions future and The Nationals don't intend signing up to a plan that negatively impacts agriculture, mining or manufacturing jobs, which are all predominantly out in our electorates.

It is why the Nationals Senate Team has decided to move amendments to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation so that it can invest in all technologies that can reduce emissions.

A highlight of the current sitting fortnight came when the Senate voted to support The Nationals call for the Victorian Labor Government to immediately reverse its decision to severely restrict the 2021 duck season.

The Senate agreed that restrictions imposed by the Andrews Government were politically motivated to unfairly target law-abiding duck hunters and the rural communities their sustainable game hunting supported.

In 2019 hunting injected \$356 million into the Victorian economy, predominantly in regional areas. The Victorian Premier wants us to believe the shortened season is based on science, not politics, but this should be seen for what it is: another step by Labor towards banning a lawful activity that delivers health, wellbeing, cultural and recreational benefits for participants and significant economic benefits for communities visited by law-abiding hunters.

Senator Bridget McKenzie



What is Manufacturing 2035? visit vicn.at/manufacturing-2035

LOWER ENERGY PRICES WILL DRIVE MANUFACTURING AND JOBS

The Nationals unashamedly advocate for Australia's abundant natural resources and critical minerals sectors, and the regional communities and jobs that it supports. We want to create jobs and opportunities for rural and regional Australians. Affordable, reliable power is key to that.

We have made that commitment clear in our **Manufacturing 2035** plan. In a stunning show of contempt for Australian workers and industry during the first sitting week of 2021, The Greens opposed a Nationals motion that backs Aussie jobs and manufacturing. The Greens were isolated in their opinion with even Labor voting to support the substance clauses of the motion.



Announcing our CEFC amendments at Parliament House with fellow Nationals Senators Susan McDonald (Qld), Sam McMahon (NT), Matt Canavan (Qld) and Perin Davey (NSW).

REMOVE RESTRICTIONS ON LOW EMISSIONS TECHNOLOGIES: NATS

As Nationals Senate Leader I was proud to outline The Nationals Senate Team plan to move amendments to the Clean Energy Finance Corporation (CEFC) so that it can invest in all technologies that can reduce emissions.

The National Party Senators back our agricultural, manufacturing and mining sectors and will continue to do everything we can to ensure their sustainability and prosperity.

We compete against the world with one hand behind our back while other nations avail themselves of cutting edge, low emissions technologies. For too long, Australia has blocked energy innovations such as nuclear and carbon capture technologies in addition to allowing High Energy, Low Emissions projects.

The amendments from The Nationals Senate Team remove the restrictions on the CEFC from investing in carbon capture and storage, nuclear technology or nuclear power. The amendments will also allow

the CEFC to invest in High Efficiency, Low Emissions coal-fired power stations.

It is hypocritical to preach net zero while at the same time blocking a zero-emission technology like nuclear that can meet base load power requirements consistently and reliably.

Our amendments would make the CEFC's mandate consistent with government policy.

The Australian Government's *Low Emissions Technology Statement*, released last year includes consideration of emerging nuclear technologies like small modular reactors.

The Nationals Senate Team's amendments would remove a ban on the CEFC funding "nuclear technology".

In 2017, the Government committed to remove a ban on the CEFC being able to invest in carbon capture and storage technologies.

Nuclear is currently used in over 30 countries worldwide.

McEWEN BOOK

My book *John McEwen: Right man, right place, right time*, published by Connor Court Publishing, was launched on December 10 at Parliament House, Canberra, by *The Australian* editor-at-large Paul Kelly. Ask for it at your local bookshop, alternatively log on to:

vicn.at/right-man-right-place-right-time.

COMMUNITY VISION

The Stronger Communities Programme provides grants of between \$2500 and \$20,000 to community organisations and local governments for small capital projects that deliver social benefits for your local communities.

Round 6 applications close on 22 March 2021.

To learn more visit: vicn.at/strong-communities

VACCINE ROLLOUT

The Government's COVID-19 Vaccination Program rollout is on track to start as scheduled. From February 22 some of our most essential workers and vulnerable Australians will be vaccinated, with more of our communities to follow in the coming weeks and months. You can find out more about the rollout and priority groups at:

aus.gov.au

WORKING FOR YOU

If you have any questions about COVID-19 or other support services and need some help, please contact my office on 02 6024 2560 or by email at this address: senator.mckenzie@aph.gov.au

During tough times The Nationals have your back.