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Profoundly unprepared: Thinktank reveals dire need for a Hyper Australia

Australia is “critically exposed to geopolitical risk”, unless Australia can reliably produce a domestic supply of liquid fuel, The Nationals’ thinktank has warned.

In its groundbreaking new report *All at Sea: Fuel, War, and Australia’s Achilles’ Heel*, the Page Research Centre has outlined a pathway to restoring Australia’s self-sustainability, including incentivising domestic oil drilling, expanding fuel reserves as supply bridges, establishing a dedicated fuel security budget and approving coal-to-liquid pilot plants.

Leader of The Nationals Senator Matt Canavan said the report proves what he has long been warning – Australia must develop its own energy, including liquid fuel.

“The real world is making a comeback,” Senator Canavan said.

“If you don’t have food and you don’t have fuel, you are pretty close to anarchy. You can’t use a carbon credit to fill up the fuel tank and we can’t unlock any strategic wind reserves.

“In this mad pursuit of net zero we have offshored our most important industries, forcing us to rely on unstable regions to meet our most basic needs.

“What this report from the Page Research Centre shows is we have all the resources here in Australia to get us out of this mess, we just need *more* Australia.

“To make Australia prosperous again, we must drill, baby drill and unleash Australia’s energy resources. I call it Hyper Australia.”

The report recommends expanding Australia’s own petroleum supply, from conventional and unconventional, and to;

- Prioritise, incentivise, and deregulate domestic exploration and drilling for crude oil, gas, and unconventional petroleum in Australia.
- Approve coal-to-liquids pilot plants, so that Australia can test and scale one of the few domestic pathways capable of supplying a substantial share of national fuel and chemical demand.
- Expand in-country fuel reserves as a bridge, not a substitute, with priority given to distributed storage.
- Recapitalise and expand domestic refining capacity to meet Australia's diesel-heavy fuel needs, including hydrocracking capability, able to process a wider range of imported and synthetic feedstocks.
- Support complementary fuel streams where they make strategic sense, including gas-to-liquid, biofuels and other alternative liquid fuel pathways.

Shadow Resources Minister Susan McDonald said Labor's ill-considered and economically damaging policies have had a predictable outcome.

"Australians will be left jobless and at the mercy of international energy supply if this keeps going," Senator McDonald said.

"The Albanese Government's continued policy failures in the resources and energy space have left businesses questioning if Australia is worth investing in, while discouraging sovereignty of supply."

Executive director of The Nationals' thinktank Page Research Centre Gerard Holland said coal-to-liquids technology is already being used at scale overseas.

"South Africa has done so for decades and China now uses enormous volumes of coal to produce diesel and other petro-liquids domestically," Mr Holland said.

"Private capital has also attempted coal-to-liquid projects in Australia, but has run into excessive green or red tape.

"As hard as it is for Australians right now, this is nowhere near our worst-case scenario. We have to be prepared for a war much closer to home, in our own region.

"There is nothing more vulnerable than a ship in war – but lucky for us our land abounds in nature's gifts and we have all the resources we need for genuine fuel security here at home.

"We can create our own energy abundance with domestic production of liquid fuels – and the necessary steps to achieve it have little economic cost."

The Page Research Centre's full report can be found at www.page.org.au