
Australia's Coalition cracks after election defeat



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SYDNEY, May 21 – Australia's long-standing conservative alliance has fractured, with the

National Party announcing it will not renew its coalition with the Liberal Party following a heavy election loss to Labor.

Nationals leader David Littleproud confirmed the break on Tuesday, citing policy disagreements and the need for "time apart" after nearly 80 years of partnership. The split comes weeks after Labor secured a second term in a landslide victory.

“The Coalition has broken and been repaired before,” Littleproud said, adding he hoped for reconciliation ahead of the next election but confirmed the Nationals would operate independently in parliament for now.

The Liberal Party, which retains the second-largest number of seats, will remain the official opposition. The Nationals, focused on rural constituencies, will no longer hold opposition roles.

New Liberal leader Sussan Ley expressed disappointment over the decision, saying shared values had long underpinned the alliance. “The Nationals refused to sign a deal without commitments to specific policies,” she noted.

Key sticking points included climate and energy policy, with the Nationals pushing for nuclear energy and showing reluctance toward net-zero emissions targets. Other contentious issues included regional infrastructure and supermarket competition reforms.

Littleproud described the split as “one of the hardest political decisions” of his life but said it was necessary for both parties to reset. He said he would work daily to rebuild ties with Ley.

The Coalition, originally formed in the 1940s, has split and reformed several times, most recently in 1987. This latest fracture follows major electoral losses for the Liberals, particularly in urban areas where their stance under former leader Peter Dutton alienated moderate voters.

Ley has vowed to reposition the party toward the center-right.