

## Briefing for Victorian Members of Parliament

### Benefits of gas demand reduction

#### Summary

- Victorian gas supplies are running out. The Victorian Government is taking the right approach – reducing gas demand by helping households repower their homes with all-electric appliances.
- This has co-benefits of (1) lowering energy bills, (2) creating healthier homes, (3) reducing emissions, and (4) avoiding politically unpopular and environmentally destructive gas supply projects.
- The Victorian Government has a commonsense approach to substituting gas, but this is at risk if it is not supported by all parliamentarians. Please support by advocating internally to stay the course, and by informing your constituents on how they can access the existing support and subsidies to repower their homes.

#### Background

Victoria's old offshore gas fields are running dry. The few new projects, such as Beach Energy's gas field near the Twelve Apostles, are just small-scale efforts to wring remaining supplies from the Gippsland and Otway basins. Fracking and coal seam gas are outlawed in Victoria – supported by a majority of voters – and other gas fields on the east coast are committed to exporting rather than supply to Victoria. Governments have recently turned their attention to costly gas import terminals to alleviate supply concerns.

But supply is only half of the story. Burning gas in homes and businesses makes up nearly two thirds of Victoria's gas use, and much of this can feasibly be substituted with electricity. Because our grid is increasingly powered by cheap renewable energy, electric appliances are already cheaper to run and cut emissions. Even better, electric appliances don't harm our health like gas appliances do, and – as anyone cooking with induction or heating their home with a heat pump will tell you – they do a much better job.

Faced with legislated emissions reduction targets to tackle climate change, a gas shortage, and good alternatives, the Victorian Government has been taking a commonsense approach to reducing gas demand. New gas connections have already been banned for a large proportion of new homes, and now they are considering new rental standards which would ensure expensive gas heaters and hot water systems are replaced with efficient electric appliances, bringing energy bill relief to those in need.

This year we are also expecting a proposal from the Victorian Government for new standards which will progressively phase in efficient electric appliances and end gas connections for *all* new builds.

Together these measures, alongside the important work to scale up renewables and transmission, will help Victoria meet its climate targets, bring down Victorians' energy bills, and help to avoid politically unpopular and environmentally destructive gas supply projects.

## How you can support

The gas industry has a long history of undermining attempts to phase out gas in Victoria and we expect considerable opposition to these policy proposals.

**We urge you to support the Victorian Government to stay the course on these policy proposals to repower Victorian homes, specifically by:**

- Informing Premier Jacinta Allan and Minister for Climate Action Lily D’Ambrosio that your constituents support moves to electrify all Victorian homes.
- Asking that all gas appliance types are included in the proposal to phase in all-electric appliances – including heating, hot water and cooking.

**In addition, we ask that you engage with and inform constituents about the benefits of going all-electric and support them to access the subsidies and support already available to them.**

## What do constituents think

In winter 2023, Environment Victoria volunteers held 582 in-depth conversations with everyday Victorians to find out what they think about gas. The conversations took place in local shopping strips, libraries and sporting clubs, via doorknocking homes, including social housing, and at train stations, markets and local events across the state, from Bairnsdale to Ballarat and everywhere in between.

**83% of respondents supported Victoria switching away from gas by 2035.**

Many shared dramatic stories of gas leaks and explosions, asthma and respiratory problems, gas bill shock and stress from rising costs, and growing concern about climate impacts. More than half of respondents had personal experience or knew someone directly impacted by these concerns.

**From our conversations we know that Victorians support repowering homes with all-electric appliances, because it tackles so many problems that they’re facing at once.**

## Further information about gas in Victoria

1. Environment Victoria & Renew (2023), ‘IT’S A GAS: How ditching gas this winter can cut heating bills by 75%. Environment Victoria & Renew’.
2. Environment Victoria (2023), What do Victorians think about gas? (Briefer for MPs).
3. Environment Victoria (2024), A pipeline of profits How gas lobbyists are keeping us hooked on expensive, climate-wrecking gas appliances.
4. Grattan Institute (2023), ‘Getting off gas: Why, how, and who should pay?’
5. Brotherhood of St Laurence & Life Course Centre (2023) ‘Enabling electrification: Addressing the barriers to moving off gas faced by lower-income households’.

## About Environment Victoria

We’re an independent charity, funded by donations. Established in 1969, we’ve grown into a community of 40 grassroots member groups and more than 200,000 supporters. Together we’re campaigning to solve the climate crisis and build a thriving, sustainable society that protects and values nature.