

JOINT STATEMENT ON VICTORIA GETTING OFF FOSSIL GAS

Dear the Hon. Premier Dan Andrews and Minister Lily D'Ambrosio,

We are facing a climate crisis. Failure to deliver deep emissions cuts this decade leaves communities exposed to intensifying heatwaves, droughts, bushfires, extreme weather, and rising sea levels.

The COP26 summit has just concluded in Glasgow, and, unfortunately, failed to put the globe on track to limit warming to 1.5C. Given that methane is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide, efforts to eliminate fossil gas are now a top priority.

The growing concern about the climate impact of fossil gas can be seen with over 100 countries signing onto an agreement to slash global methane emissions by 30 percent this decade. The Morrison government refused to sign onto the agreement that was spearheaded by the Biden Administration.

With the Morrison government's refusal to deliver a credible plan to cut emissions this decade, the community is looking to the state government to step up again and show greater political leadership.

The Victorian government has affirmed its commitment to tackling the climate crisis by strengthening the *Climate Change Act* and committing to halve the state's emissions this decade.

Since 2014, the Andrews government has legislated a permanent ban on unconventional gas, established a Victorian Renewable Energy Target, and supported the rollout of clean substitutes for inefficient gas heaters—measures that reduce our reliance on gas.

We believe the Victorian government's *Gas Substitution Roadmap* is a key opportunity for our state to build on these positive steps. It can accelerate the move away from gas to cheaper and cleaner options while maintaining affordable and reliable supplies of energy to businesses and households.

We believe the *Gas Substitution Roadmap* should:

- Establish the Victorian government's commitment to the rights of Traditional Custodians to free, prior and informed consent regarding gas exploration and development on Country and Sea Country.
- Accept the evidence that Victoria can rapidly move away from gas while maintaining reliable and affordable energy supply to households and businesses.¹
- Rule out opening new acreages for gas exploration and development, to remain consistent with the International Energy Agency's Roadmap in order to meet net zero emissions by 2050.
- Adopt policies that use remaining supply in active gas wells in the Bass Strait prudently, and end exports, so that gas imports are not needed. The government should establish gas reserves, more storage, and demand-response interventions to prevent shortfall as we move away from gas to clean technologies.
- Reject proposals for new gas infrastructure such as import terminals and pipeline upgrades. Community safety and international LNG safety industry best practice regulations must take precedence when considering gas infrastructure developments at all times.
- Rule out adding hydrogen in the pipelines for domestic and commercial use. If hydrogen is to be used for other purposes such as industry or heavy transport it must only be hydrogen generated entirely by renewable energy.
- Commit to eliminating gas as soon as possible and adopt a minimum target to halve Victorian gas use by 2030.

- Electrify everything that can be electrified to cut emissions, ensure safe and livable homes, save households money, and create jobs and competitive industries.
- Remove outdated regulations that force new homes to connect to the gas network and cease gas connections to new housing developments immediately.
- Work with local councils to mandate that new homes are all-electric.
- Increase education for the community, tradespeople, and industry regarding electrifying homes and improving energy efficiency.
- Facilitate a rapid reduction in domestic and commercial gas use, especially for the top 20 percent of household users, so that peak demand in winter is no higher than 1,000 terajoules per day.
- Facilitate a rapid reduction in industrial gas use by requiring industry-wide participation in the Victorian Energy Upgrade program and supporting the adoption of new clean technologies and processes (such as heat pumps).
- Set in motion immediate preparation for a well planned and amply resourced transition of industry away from gas while ensuring justice for workers.
- Require the government to make eliminating gas a key priority of Victoria's next Climate Change Strategy, Emissions Reduction Target setting processes, Planning Scheme amendments, planning decisions, and state budget.

victoria's positive climate and energy policies have cut the state's emissions by 25 percent between 2005 and 2019, and will create 28,400 jobs² and attract billions of investment to the state.

We urge the Labor government to adopt the aforementioned recommendations in the *Gas Substitution Roadmap* to build on the progress to date and cement a leadership role. There is a lot more work to do to address the climate crisis, and Victorians are up for the challenge and keen to reap the benefits of strong action on climate change.

Signed,



Victorian Climate Action Network



