



30 October 2023

## **Residential gas ban must be put on backburner, says gas industry body**

The Victorian government has been urged to delay its proposed ban on gas connections to new residential homes to ease uncertainty over what the move means for families and workers.

The Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association of Australia says the plan to implement the ban in just 10 weeks' time does not allow time for sensible consultation.

GAMAA President Ross Jamieson said that rushing the implementation threatened to create new pressures on housing affordability at a time when Victorians were already battling increasing cost-of-living pressures.

"The gas appliance industry, and it seems most Victorians, support policies to reduce carbon emissions and meet the state's climate goals, but the residential gas ban is a distraction from those goals, with relatively small emissions reductions, if any, and a high economic cost," Mr Jamieson said.

"The Victorian government has chosen the worst time to kick off its gas ban. The transition to cleaner power generation is not happening fast enough to manage the electricity grid demands of a rapid switch from gas to electric appliances.

"With an El Nino summer approaching, electricity grid operators have warned Victorians will face an increased risk of rolling blackouts. Forced electrification of new Victorian homes ahead of the decarbonisation of our power supply will just push households on to a coal-based electricity grid that is already under significant pressure."

He said the move would force significant financial pressure on consumers.

"The Victorian Premier's backing of the State Electricity Commission's cooking-with-coal scheme will push up emissions and the chance of blackouts, while consumers are asked to pay an upfront bill in the tens of thousands of dollars.

"The reality is that when brown coal leaves the state's energy system, the cost of electricity will significantly rise, as has been the case in other states," he said.

"Gas is part of the transition to renewable energy and achieving net zero by 2050. Labor governments across the country understand this sentiment."

GAMAA has made calls to the government to change the timeline on the ban – highlighting that under normal sensible circumstances, stakeholders including industry are given three years to implement changes as significant as those proposed – and a chance to have meaningful consultation with government.

"Although GAMAA members do not agree with the ban proposed by the Victorian Government, we request that the Minister at least comes to the table to shift the timeline of the ban."

He refuted the cost savings claims made by the government, pointing to a Frontier Economics report that highlights an average four-bedroom all-electric home in Melbourne will cost between \$15,000 and \$26,000 more than if equivalent gas appliances are used.

"Victorian families are facing a cost-of-living crisis now – and forecasts of possible savings do nothing to help," Mr Jamieson concluded.

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