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Victorian Minister's proposal to end gas appliance rebates would hit households hard

Victorian families grappling with a cost-of-living crisis while facing justified concerns on energy security may soon face further pressures after the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, Lily D'Ambrosio proposed new measures to restrict gas distribution companies from providing residential or small business customers significant discounts on their gas appliances.

The president of the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association of Australia, Ross Jamieson, said the Victorian Government's policies meant increasing financial burdens and energy uncertainty for families and family-owned businesses.

With no consultation with an industry that employs more than 4,000 Australians, Minister D'Ambrosio is proposing new restrictions on the energy choices available to Victorian homes and businesses. The announcement comes as the Government persists with a rushed ban on gas connections to new homes, that will significantly increase the cost of those homes.

"All of this is done in a seemingly ideological stance against gas – for no significant impact on the state's emissions," Mr Jamieson said.

The Federal Government's recently released Future Gas Strategy consultation paper notes that only 2.3% of Australia's overall emissions come from use of gas in homes and small businesses.

"In a state still dependent on brown coal for the bulk of its power generation, it makes little sense to focus on residential and small business gas use, or to force Victorians to use electric appliances that will be powered by coal.

"The Minister's obsessive focus on residential gas does nothing to advance Victoria's transition to a renewable energy grid," Mr Jamieson said.

He said consecutive measures restricting the gas industry hurt Victorian families who want to purchase gas appliances, and the Victorian workers who make them.

"More than 60% of gas appliances sold in Australia are made in Australia," Mr Jamieson said.

"GAMAA members have already seen a loss of 10% in direct industry jobs, with a further 20% reduction likely within 6 months should the change to rebates be rammed through in conjunction with the ban on connecting gas to new homes."

"GAMAA is supportive of the Government's net-zero target by 2050. But ideological moves to restrict the gas industry are not a sensible or an efficient method to achieve this target.

"We would urge the Victorian Government to reconsider this proposal before poorly designed policies are implemented."

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