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UK Labour shows Victoria's isolation on gas appliance bans

The Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association of Australia (GAMAA) today noted the announcement yesterday by the UK Labour Government that it is dropping proposals to force households to replace gas hot water boilers with electric heaters as recognition that such draconian approaches impose high costs, and do not enjoy public support.

The Starmer Government overnight announced it was scrapping a proposal to phase out gas hot water boilers in existing premises by 2035 under the UK building code which was controversially announced by the previous government.

Instead, it will focus on raising energy efficiency standards and providing information for consumers to make informed choices around more efficient gas and electric appliances.

GAMAA president Ross Jamieson said: "This is a victory for common sense, and we call on the Victorian Labor Government to follow the lead of their UK counterparts and abandon its increasingly madcap push to ban the replacement of gas hot water and heating appliances."

"I also note the recent comments by former ACTU president and Labor MP Jennie George and the Western Australian Energy and Climate Minister Reece Whitby which recognise the importance of gas in providing flexibility in securing climate goals at least cost."

"The fact is that while electrification may be sensible for some, for many of the two million Victorian households and businesses which use gas, forced electrification will impose significant out of pocket costs while driving up gas and electricity prices for everyone else and putting more pressure on an already struggling electricity network. The high cost of these impacts cannot be ignored given it has now been independently confirmed by research just released by Professor Paul Simshauser and his team at Griffith University."

"We also know from independent research that converting ducted gas heating and hot water in an average 4-bedroom house could cost an extra \$27,000 or more in older houses. This is far in excess of government estimates and well outside any possible pay-back period over the life of the appliance, even with available subsidies.

Very few homeowners or rental providers have a spare \$27,000 lying around and this will simply drive greater household financial debt and stress."

He said the Victorian government's own analysis showed it would damage the state's gas network's viability for little gain as the gas savings don't address the looming shortfall.

"In a modern interconnected economy, the idea that households must be prevented from using gas because Bass Strait production is fading is simply absurd. If you are running low on car parts you don't ban cars and force people to ride bikes, you bring in more car parts. As the Victorian Energy Minister has repeatedly said there are measures underway in Victoria and elsewhere to ensure sufficient gas supply," Mr Jamieson added.

"With public polling showing overwhelming public support for gas, GAMAA calls on the Victorian Government to do the right thing by struggling families and businesses and adopt a least cost flexible approach which includes the use of high efficiency gas appliances that reduce gas use and emissions by 25% and save \$200 off energy bills annually."

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