



10 May 2016

SA Royal Commission Final Report confirms clean future with natural gas

The critical role of cleaner-burning natural gas in the low-carbon economy of the future has been highlighted by the Final Report of South Australia's Nuclear Fuel Cycle Royal Commission.

APPEA Chief Executive Dr Malcolm Roberts said the Royal Commission's findings, released yesterday, were a clear endorsement of natural gas.

The Final Report has found that nuclear energy would not be commercially viable to supply baseload electricity to the South Australian subregion of the National Electricity Market from 2030, the earliest date for its possible introduction.

Instead, it points to a growing role for renewable energy in partnership with natural gas.

"Modelling suggests that it is unlikely that Australia could fully decarbonise its electricity sector by 2050 by relying on renewables alone. Combined cycle gas turbines will be required for system stability in the absence of other dispatchable generation."

And:

"Gas-fired generation plays a significant role in providing reliable supply under all future low-carbon scenarios for the electricity sector. Under the Commission's model of a Strong Carbon Price scenario, gas was estimated to deliver more than 30 per cent of generation across the NEM by 2050."

Dr Roberts said the Final Report was further confirmation that natural gas had a critical role to play in reducing Australia's carbon emissions.

"Natural gas generation is ideally suited to complement renewable energy because it can be rapidly turned on and off to respond to changes in intermittent generation from renewable sources," he said.

"The Australian Council of Learned Academies has found that using gas to provide more baseload and peak electricity generation – combined with increased use of renewables – could slash the Australian electricity sector's emissions by up to 50 per cent.

"Developing Australia's abundant natural gas resources will clearly provide significant environmental, economic and social benefits."

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