

MEDIA RELEASE

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Greens gas policy would leave ACT in the cold

ACT residents should be given the right to choose the best energy source for their homes, leading energy industry experts said today.

Phasing out the use of natural gas in the ACT would deny residents the choice of a safe, reliable and convenient energy source for their homes.

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA), the Energy Networks Association (ENA), the Australian Pipelines and Gas Association (APGA) and the Gas Appliance Manufacturers Association of Australia (GAMAA) have called for common sense policy discussion in the ACT election.

The ACT Greens are threatening to ban gas reticulation to new Canberra suburbs and prohibit the sale of new or replacement gas hot water systems, which would deny the citizens the right to choose a safe, reliable, affordable energy source.

APPEA Chief Executive Dr Malcolm Roberts said the blackouts in South Australia showed the value of diversity in energy supply.

"Gas is a low cost, low carbon and convenient fuel of choice when it comes to cooking, hot water and winter heating," Dr Roberts said.

"When the lights went out in South Australia thousands of families were still able to cook their dinners, heat their homes and enjoy warm showers thanks to natural gas."

ENA Chief Executive Officer John Bradley said limiting the choice of energy customers to install gas could cause overall energy bills to rise and put extra pressure on the electricity network to meet energy demand.

"During Canberra's cold winters when the electricity network is under pressure, the gas network plays a vital role, with monthly gas consumption in winter about seven times the level during summer," Mr Bradley said.

"Like the rest of Australia, Canberra relies on gas for energy security and reliability, so it is unfortunate to see proposals for radical changes that don't assess the impacts on customers."

APGA Chief Executive Cheryl Cartwright said gas used directly in the home is a low-emission choice and supply to houses is secure and very reliable.

"Using gas is clearly a climate-friendly alternative that we should be encouraging," Ms Cartwright said."

GAMAA President Andrew Creek said all fuel sources would play a role in securing Australia's energy future.

"Targeting one fuel source and class of appliance for elimination, in this case gas appliances, is neither sensible nor feasible, and represents the worst of regulatory over-reach," Mr Creek said.

"Remember that ten years ago the same people were preaching the need to ban electric water heaters, the same product that would now be installed if this ill-thought out gas appliance ban was to be imposed.

"History shows that the only sure outcome when politicians and regulators attempt to pick future winners and losers, is that they will get it wrong".

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