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VICTORIAN OPPOSITION RECOGNITION OF GAS AS CENTRAL TO CLEANER ENERGY FUTURE IS SENSIBLE POLICY

Australia's oil and gas industry has noted the return of a balanced discussion about Victorian energy policy, with recognition from the State Opposition that natural gas is central to the cleaner energy future.

The Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association (APPEA) today said Opposition Leader Matthew Guy's pledge to end natural gas bans and use the energy source to replace coal and partner with renewables on the road to net zero was a sensible position backed by experts.

APPEA Chief Executive Samantha McCulloch said: "This position understands the fundamental energy system changes occurring globally – with natural gas widely acknowledged to have a central, and even wider, role in the future energy mix than it does today.

"Natural gas will replace higher emitting coal and firm renewable power generation, support manufacturing, help make everyday products as well as act as a feedstock for hydrogen.

"As the Federal Government's special adviser on low emissions technology, former chief scientist Dr Alan Finkel, said recently, gas can even speed up the journey to a cleaner energy future."

Ms McCulloch said Mr Guy had called out the untenable position of Victoria relying heavily on coal-powered electricity while having minimal onshore gas production because of a decade of development bans, which have deprived Victorians of the cheapest gas available to them.

"Victorians currently pay \$2 extra for every gigajoule of gas to be transported from Queensland under this policy, which ignores the fundamental rule that the cheapest gas is the gas produced closest to the customer," she said.

"The industry has announced over \$20 billion of new supply investments over the past two years. But little of that has been in Victoria because of a decade of uncertainty, moratoriums and bans. We need certainty and the investment policy settings to be right.

"As well as continued energy security, new investment can also turbocharge the economy, creating jobs and adding to the almost \$500 billion of economic activity the gas industry already enables annually across Australia."

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