

Gas infrastructure advice submission –105

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Stakeholder group/interest: householder - no affiliation

Q1. Do you have any further information, evidence, or concerns that you wish to raise in relation to the scenario design and analysis?

Only that the decisions reached by this process and the Victorian State Government MUST be informed by the recommendations of the recent IPCC report.

Q2. Do you have any further information or evidence that can help identify an optimum scenario for a net zero emissions gas sector in 2050?

Optimally, we should be able to rely on efficient electrical appliances powered by renewable resources: rooftop solar with home-based or community-based battery storage, or large scale solar generation with massive battery storages like the one near Geelong.

Q3. What policies and/or regulations, if any, are needed to support the development of low carbon pathways such as biogas, green hydrogen, and carbon capture and storage?

These approaches are all focussed on preserving existing infrastructure which needs to be by-passed. My opinion is that they should NOT be supported with public funds. The regulations should be aimed allowing private businesses to build emergency back-up energy supply, if anything. The private business will then suffer the losses inherent in stranded assets, not the public purse.

Q4. What is your view on the best ways to maintain the reliability and affordability of Victoria's gas supply if natural gas use declines?

If any of the existing infrastructure can be re-purposed to deliver renewable energy supply, then that's what should be done. But the primary goal is NOT to support gas supply infrastructure, despite the huge and misguided investment our state has made in it, but to phase out gas use completely as the IPCC report insists is essential.

Q5. What else can you tell us about the implications of decarbonisation pathways for the electricity generation, transmission and distribution networks?

It will be an absolute dog-fight as invested and powerful (sorry for that pun) businesses seek to protect their assets. Their campaigns to seduce Victorians into believing in the absolute necessity of their assets will be difficult to counter. MUCH work, using the skills of effective advertising and educational bodies will be needed - this is where finances will need to be directed for some time.

Q6. How can the use of Victoria's existing gas infrastructure be optimised during the transition to net zero emissions, over the short (10 years), medium (20 years) and long-term (30+ years)? How can the Victorian Government assist in this?

To repeat - the goal must not be the protection and continued use of existing gas infrastructure. Only essential maintenance for safety should be continued in the coming decade after which the infrastructure should be allowed to be sequentially removed as, zone, by zone, electrification powered by renewable energy will be promoted and invested in.

Q7. What principles should apply or what measures will be needed to manage the impacts of gas decarbonisation on households and businesses?

It's probably impossible to insure that no business interests will suffer. But the goal must be to protect the employees of old energy companies by REALLY ensuring a just transition for them from their current skill set to new jobs.

It is vital to the success of this process that workers are justly transitioned.

Businesses could be encouraged with grants and government policies to engage in newer technologies generating electricity that doesn't destroy our shared environment.

Q8. What policies, programs and/or regulations should the Victorian Government consider or expand to encourage households, commercial buildings and small businesses to reduce their gas use?

The Victorian Government advertised its intention to create a huge new tranche of social housing: what a fantastic opportunity to ensure all these new homes are powered by renewable electricity sources. Regulations should ensure all new housing and business premises in Victoria meet new requirements for integrating solar panels, etc into their build, and no new gas infrastructure or connections to current infrastructure should be permitted without satisfying serious and restricting requirements.

Bulk purchasing by government - or by 'old energy' companies seeking to expand into new markets - of home storage batteries, induction cooktops, split-system air conditioners, even EVs will help reduce costs of the necessary transition.

Q9. What policies, regulations or other support, if any, do you think are needed to support industrial users to switch from natural gas to lower emissions energy sources or chemical feedstocks?

No doubt industrial users will have an opinion on this and will inform the political parties of their demands.

Support is necessary, that's accepted, though we might begin by penalising businesses that persist with out-dated polluting practices despite the clear data (e.g. the IPCC report) opposing these.

If our government elucidates clear policies and acts transparently (i.e. NOT "business as usual!") in their partnerships with companies, perhaps the despised PPPs might benefit both the companies and we the people. But here it's clear that an effective ICAC is essential.

How would you like your submission treated?

Published with my name