Submission template

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Stakeholder group/interest: Transport for Melbourne Inc but also as a private individual

Q1. Do you have any further information, evidence, or concerns that you wish to raise in relation to the scenario design and analysis?
I have run forum/round tables on global environmental change engaging some of top climate and earth scientists - the first in 2009, the last in December 2020 which provides a very recent update of the environmental situation with direct implications for policies on the use of gas. The proceedings of this are available on the Transport for Melbourne web site www.transportformelbourne.org/forums/The Future We Must Plan For.

The latest scientific advice at the time was the imperative to achieve zero emissions before 2030 in order to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees (in fact we need to reduce emissions by 125% by that date) and rapidly reduce emissions immediately with interim targets. Should note that the need to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees or less is a commitment by the G7 group of nations. On this basis all fossil gas use should be phased out as quickly as possible before 2030

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?
As noted above on the basis of the latest science earlier targets of zero emissions by 2050 or 2040 are no longer valid. There is an imperative to aim for 2030 at the latest.

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?
There are no simple or single fix solutions - many actions are required and there is not space in this submission to list them all or even attempt to do so. It will require a carefully thought out strategy for "change" with a mix of carrots and sticks. I suggest you look at Donella Meadows paper on system change to identify levers for changing the system and design programs to match. I suggest that development of low carbon parthways needs to be carried out as an integral part of much broader system change ie not treated in isolation

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?
Similar response to the above. It is a case of creating pathways for society and business that enables them to change to a new way of business ie using carrots and sticks and creating the environment which enables them to do so. No magic solutions - just do what works but remembering there is little time left to act so it must be treated as an emergency. Should note that it will be inevitable that many businesses today will not survive in a zero emission world and hopefully new jobs will replace them in new industries that do have a future. It is imperative that serious modelling be carried out to enable planners to understand what a zero emission world looks like so we can use it as a benchmark and establish pathways to achieve it - ie working backwards from this end point.

Q5. What else can you tell us about the implications of decarbonisation pathways for the electricity generation, transmission and distribution networks?
The implications are profound and will require a total transformation of every aspect of the way we live, the decisions/choices we make as a society. This must be treated as an emergency in the same way we responded to covid.

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?
Government must play a leadership role by setting its own targets for all businesses under its direct control and use this to demonstrate to the broader community how it can be done. It can also create demonstration projects in partnership with the private sector to achieve the same ends.

Finally it must create the environment for broader change and total transformation of the entire community to enable it to respond ie with carrots and sticks etc as mentioned above

Q7. What principles should apply or what measures will be needed to manage the impacts of gas decarbonisation on households and businesses?
Principles must be good governance, honesty, accountability and integrity of government. It is critical that measurable targets be established which can be monitored regularly so that progress can be tracked and programs etc adjusted as required to enable programs to be kept on track. This is critical for the community because they must not only be part of this process but must assume ownership of it as well - without it it will be very difficult to achieve the necessary outcomes

Q8. What polices, programs and/or regulations should the Victorian Government consider or expand to encourage households, commercial buildings and small businesses to reduce their gas use?
I cannot attempt to list all of them - it must apply system wide

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?
I cannot detail this - there are too many to list

How would you like your submission treated?
Published with my name