



AUSTRALIA

Australian State Bans Residential Gas to Tackle Climate Change and High Energy Prices



A gas burner is seen in Melbourne, Australia, on July 28. (Alfred Bui/The Epoch Times)



By [Alfred Bui](#)
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The Victorian government has introduced a ban on gas connections in new homes from 2024 to achieve net zero emissions by 2045.

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On July 28, the [state government](#) announced that from Jan. 1, 2024, planning permits for new homes and residential subdivisions, including new public and social housing, will not include gas connections.

This means homeowners will only be able to use electric appliances in their new homes.

The changes will also apply to newly built government buildings, including schools, hospitals, and police stations. However, commercial construction will be exempted from the ban.

In making the decision, the state government said Victoria had the highest use of residential gas in Australia, with 80 percent of local homes connecting to gas.

It also noted that 17 percent of the state's emissions came from the gas sector.

Victorian Government Says New Policy Help Save Energy Bills

While touting the ban as a "landmark decision," the Victorian government said the move would impose no extra costs on state residents and help them save up to \$1,000 (US\$667) in annual energy bills.

"We know that with every bill that arrives, gas is only going to get more expensive. That's why we're stepping in to help even more Victorians get the best deal on their energy bills," Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources [Lily D'Ambrosio](#) said.

"Reducing our reliance on gas is critical to meeting our ambitious emission reduction target of net zero by 2045 and getting more Victorians on more efficient electric appliances, which will save them money on their bills."

The ban comes as millions of Australians have been hit with electricity [price surges](#) since July 1, with price increases going as high as \$600 per year for some households.

Meanwhile, the Australian Energy Market Operator ([AEMO](#)) warned in February that the country's mainland states could experience electricity shortages as early as 2027 as at least five coal-fired power stations, which account for 13 percent of the market's capacity, would be shut down.

The switch to electricity in Victoria is likely to put additional pressure on the national grid, which urgently needs new projects to go online.



A power plug is placed into a power socket in Melbourne, Australia, on Oct. 22, 2012. (Quinn Rooney/Getty Images)

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Apart from the changes to Victoria's planning regulations, the state government announced a new \$10 million residential electrification grants program for volume home builders, developers and others to provide bulk rebates for solar panels, solar hot water and heat pumps in new homes.

In addition, the government will set aside \$1 million to provide training for the construction sector during the transition and another \$3 million to train 1,000 plumbers and 400 electricians.

It is also working to update the gas substitution roadmap, which is set to release in late 2023.

Mixed Response from Political Parties and Public

Following the announcement, the state Opposition said the ban would push up energy prices due to higher electricity demand.

Shadow Treasurer Brad Rowsell described the move as a case of "desperate policy on the run."

"We know when the Andrews Labor government executes desperate policy on the run. It's not them who take responsibility or pay the price, but every Victorian pays the price," [he said](#).

"What the government has done today, with little to no notice, has imposed upon every Victorian family, and every Victorian household, higher energy costs at a time when they can least afford it.

"We need a sensible transition, not panic decisions that restrict choice and lead to higher energy prices."

While the Victorian Greens welcomed the changes, it said the Labor government was falling short in other policy areas.

"It is strange that Labor acknowledges gas is an expensive, polluting fossil fuel on the one hand, while on the other hand is changing the law to make it easier to open new mines and is approving new gas drilling across the state," Greens deputy leader Ellen Sandell said.

Despite supporting the new policy, Master Builders Victoria, a peak industry body, believed state consumers should have the freedom to make decisions regarding their needs.

"State and federal governments must continue to engage with industry stakeholders to develop comprehensive policies that consider the varied energy requirements of different consumers and building types," Master Builders Victoria CEO Michaela Lihou said.

However, the Institute of Public Affairs criticised the move, saying the Victorian government should focus on reducing energy prices by removing barriers to gas exploration.

"Banning the use of gas is fundamentally out of step with community expectations," deputy executive director Daniel Wild said.

Meanwhile, [Innes Willox](#), the CEO of the Australian Industry Group, warned about the ban's significant impacts on home appliance manufacturers.

He also noted that other jurisdictions would likely follow Victoria's step in phasing out gas connections for residential buildings.



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