



Getting off gas for households and congregations for the sake of the planet

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Climate change is already causing severe harm to the lives of hundreds of millions of people across the globe – the science is clear. Climate change will cause increased extreme weather events (floods, droughts, heat waves), rising sea levels and loss of food production.

Addressing human-induced climate change will require a sustained global effort over decades. Actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions made now will take decades to reduce the harm caused by climate change. However, failing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions now will lock the planet into further climate change, with increased climate-related damage.

At the 2021 Synod meeting, the Synod adopted a position on climate change that included an acknowledgement for:

the need for immediate and substantial action by governments, businesses and communities, including the councils and institutions of the church in this Synod, to mitigate climate change caused by human activity and the threat it poses to God's good creation.

Victoria's gas sector makes up around 17% of the net greenhouse gas emissions for the state. Gas is used in the homes and businesses of over two million Victorians, which makes Victoria the most gas-dependent jurisdiction of any state or territory in Australia.¹ Eliminating the use of gas will play a role in future decarbonising efforts. The objective will be the electrification of businesses and households from renewable sources.

Gas is also unhealthy. Cooking with gas has been estimated to be responsible for up to 12% of childhood asthma in Australia. A child living with gas cooking in the home faces a comparable risk of asthma to a child living in a household with cigarette smoke.

In July 2022, Victoria released its [Gas Substitution Roadmap](#) as part of its plan to achieve net zero emissions for the state.²

The following are some tips for congregations and households that wish to reduce their use of gas or get off gas altogether. Shifting off gas makes the most sense when you have rooftop solar or purchase GreenPower. However, even where that is not the case, the Victorian Government is moving to get rid of coal-fired power generation.

Energy Efficiency changes

Energy efficiency tips can be found at victorianenergysaver.vic.gov.au. In 2022, Sustainability Victoria's report, assessing the Victorian Healthy Homes program in 1,000 homes, showed that an investment of \$3,000 produced nearly \$1,000 in savings on health and energy bills over a three-month winter period.

An easy first step is to seal all gaps around doors, windows and old vents. Such measures include foam sealing strips on door frames or draught stop fixtures.

Double or triple glazing on windows also will significantly improve energy efficiency.

¹ <https://www.energy.vic.gov.au/renewable-energy/victorias-gas-substitution-roadmap>

² Lily D'Ambrosio, Victorian Minister for Energy, 'Gas Roadmap Drives Down Energy Bills And Emissions', Media Release, 1 July 2022.



Changing to efficient electric appliances

In Victoria, a range of rebates can assist households with the costs of swapping from gas-fired appliances to efficient electric appliances. For example, there are rebates of up to \$1,000 to replace your old hot water heater with an approved electric or solar hot water system. Go to <https://www.solar.vic.gov.au/solar-hot-water-rebate>

The Metropolitan Community Power Hub (<https://www.yef.org.au/mcph/>) can provide free and independent advice on switching from old gas appliances to efficient electric ones.

Switching from a gas cooktop to an electric induction cooktop can be tricky, as you might be uncertain how it will impact your cooking. A portable plug-in induction cooktop can be a way to test the change before taking the plunge to change over your built-in cooktop. Portable plug-in induction cooktops are lightweight and run from your existing power points. Many good options start from as little as \$50.



Electric induction cooktops can be used with woks made from a ferromagnetic material such as stainless steel, carbon steel or cast iron to deliver the same great flash cooking much more efficiently than gas cooking.

Approximately 40% of household energy is used for heating and cooling. Gas heating is now one of the most polluting and expensive ways to heat a home. However, reverse-cycle air conditioners are now better for the climate and cheaper. Climate Council analysis indicates that, on average, reverse-cycle air conditioners cost about half as much to run as standing gas or ducted gas heaters.

Electric heat pumps are now a cleaner and more affordable technology than gas hot water systems. Heat pump hot water systems are more efficient than traditional electric and gas hot water systems. They have annual running costs around 50% lower than an instantaneous gas system.

It's always best to check with an electrician when switching gas appliances to electric ones.

Changing over your appliances comes with a cost, but you do not need to do it all at once. Gradually replacing gas appliances with electric alternatives as they reach the end of their life is an affordable way to transition your home or church building over time. Every device you switch over will help reduce your home's emissions. Switching from gas to electricity across your house will likely save between \$500 and \$1,900 in energy bills yearly.

If you have managed to switch all your appliances to electric, it is generally worthwhile to get disconnected from gas to avoid the ongoing service charge for being connected. However, be warned that some gas retailer corporations are charging excessive prices for gas disconnections or making the process overly complex to try and deter people from disconnecting from gas.

If you have changed from gas to electric, we would encourage you to tell us your story – and encourage your friends and family to make the change as well.

Acknowledgement: The JIM Cluster used Environment Victoria, Climateworks, Friends of the Earth and Climate Council materials for the above sheet.