

## The need to get off gas

June 2024

*God calls us to live in harmony with our natural environment and to seek justice and well-being for all creation.*

*The Synod resolves to acknowledge 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.*

Synod of Victoria and Tasmania resolution from February 2021



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 increase extreme weather events (floods, droughts, heat waves), rise in 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 many years 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.

In May 2024, the Commonwealth Government released a “Future Gas Strategy.” The Strategy unnecessarily locks in using gas when it could be avoided. For example, it locks in that households continue to be offered the choice of a new gas connection. By contrast, the Victorian Government has moved to phase out gas use and banned new gas connections to homes.

The Strategy sees the development of massive new gas fields and the construction of gas import terminals despite Australia being the world's largest gas exporter in 2022. Three-quarters of Australian extracted gas is exported, and Australia's gas exports increased fivefold between 2010 and 2022.

The Strategy states that gas use in Australia was responsible for 24% of Australia's greenhouse gas emissions in the 2021–2022 financial year.

On the positive side, the Strategy promises that the Commonwealth Government will work with gas corporations and regulators to reduce gas-related emissions from venting and flaring.

The Minister for Resources, Madeleine King, told a conference of oil and gas producers on 21 May, “Let me be clear: gas has a role to play in our future, but emissions have to rapidly and permanently come down.”

The Victorian Energy Minister, Lily D'Ambrosio, has criticised the size of the increase in new gas production in the Commonwealth Government's Strategy while acknowledging that some additional gas will be needed for use in Australia even with a rapid transition away from gas.

Under the Strategy, the Prime Minister has promised no Commonwealth Government funding for gas corporations. However, the Queensland Labor Government has committed \$21 million to support the fast-tracking of new gas projects in that state.

Six Labor MPs have publicly spoken out against the Strategy and called for a greater focus on renewable energy and a rapid phasing out of dependence on gas.

We have the opportunity now to be part of the Australian community calling for the Commonwealth Government to rethink the Strategy and reduce production and reliance on gas to that which cannot be avoided.

### **What You Can Do**

Write polite and respectful letters to:

#### **The Hon Chris Bowen MP**

Minister for Climate Change and Energy  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Salutation: Dear Minister

#### **The Hon Madeleine King MP**

Minister for Resources  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

Salutation: Dear Minister

Points to make in your letters:

- Express concern at the Government's Future Gas Strategy, which appears to lock the Australian community into a higher dependence on the use of gas than is necessary.
- Express concern that the need to move away from using all fossil fuels is urgent if Australia is to play its fair share in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and keeping the global average temperature increase below 1.5°C to minimise the harm from climate change.
- Ask that the Future Gas Strategy be reworked to move away from dependence on gas more rapidly. Note that the Victorian Government Gas Substitution Roadmap is an example of the kind of strategy that is needed.
- Note that three-quarters of Australia's gas is being exported, so developing new gas fields should not be necessary. Instead, more gas should be reserved to meet Australian domestic use where necessary.