

PRESS RELEASE

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The New Energy Paradigm- The Road Ahead

Australian energy policy needs to be separated from the populist social media cycle if our energy markets are to improve, according to the Hon Gary Gray, the federal Shadow Minister for Resources, opening Day Two of the annual Energy Users Association of Australia (EUAA) national conference, New Energy Paradigm- Better Energy. Better Business.

‘It’s never been more important to take the politics out of national energy policy,’ said Mr Gray. Addressing the theme of ‘The Road Ahead,’ Mr Gray called for a rationalised approach to renewables, and for companies to be reassured that policy moving forward will offer real solutions to bring more gas into eastern markets, rather than knee jerk reactions.

Victorian Shadow Minister for Energy, the Hon Lily D’Ambrosio, followed Mr Gray with a key message that government needs to facilitate opportunities for sustainable, equitable and affordable energy that can support industry. Ms D’Ambrosio called for an investment in the industries for the future- specifically clean energy technology to give Victoria a sustainable energy landscape.

Both Shadow Ministers emphasised the importance of bi-partisanship in energy policy. Hon Gary Gray made a strong plea for State governments to open up gas supply opportunities and that the recent report from the NSW Chief Scientist paves a road for a considered plan to bring forth gas supply.

‘Energy users have long advocated that the actions in NSW and Victoria through exclusion zones and moratoriums need to be lifted as one part of the solution towards affordable and secure gas supply,’ said Phil Barresi, EUAA Chief Executive Officer. ‘We support Hon Gary Gray’s plea; this will not happen unless bipartisanship support is given to counter the fear campaign mounted in regional locations.’

‘Further delays and inquiries in NSW and Victoria are unnecessary,’ said Mr Barresi. ‘Reports and inquiries from Department of Industry, Productivity Council, AEMO, the EUAA and various other industry bodies has thrown up a wealth of data. We have a price and a supply problem now and yet energy users are being held hostage to the political electoral cycle.’

In the lead up to the forthcoming Victorian election, Hon D’Ambrosio lamented the decline of bipartisanship on energy consumption policy. For many users, the continuation of the VEET policy is considered an unnecessary imposition and at odds with other schemes in place interstate.

Day Two of the conference featured presentations that continued to explore the New Energy Paradigm. Tony Wood from the Grattan Institute delivered research results that indicates that whilst electricity consumption has fallen, paradoxically, electricity prices have been rising, and that Australians are paying too much for electricity because the regulation of distribution networks is broken. Mr Wood called for the establishment of a consistent, national approach to setting reliability standards, as well as the need to address over investment and make prices more cost-reflective. Mr Wood also highlighted the critical role of the EUAA in bringing all key players to the table, and holding policy makers accountable.

For interviews with EUAA Chief Executive Officer Phil Barresi contact Holly Cardamone on 0412 926 604