

PRESS RELEASE

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Energy Users Critical to Gas Crisis Talks

Large energy users, represented by the Energy Users Association of Australia (EUAA) has welcomed today's meeting between the Prime Minister and senior gas industry executives but has also stressed that the primary focus of the National Gas Objective (NGO) must be the priority.

The NGO clearly states that it exists 'to promote efficient investment in, and efficient operation ... for the long-term interests of consumers' To effectively assess this, energy users must be part of the conversation.

"There is no longer any doubt that we are in the midst of an unprecedented gas crisis that will only get worse if urgent and decisive action is not taken," said EUAA CEO Andrew Richards.

"Given energy users are the ones who pay the bill they must have a stronger say about changes to energy markets and be at the centre of discussions about solutions to fix the current crisis."

Energy users have been concerned about a looming crisis in energy markets for some time. This year as energy users are coming off their contracts, the crisis has become apparent with price rises of up to 150% for some users.

EUAA's submission into the Finkel review detailed some of the key issues facing users but acknowledged that any solutions must also consider some short-term measures to resolve the acute issue of a gas shortage.

"Some of our members are being presented with new contracts that include skyrocketing prices, other members in South Australia are unable to get a gas contract at all," said Mr Richards. "This is a completely absurd situation given the gas resources Australia possess and that we are the single largest exporter of gas in the world."

Without including energy users in the conversation over solutions to the immediate gas crisis, it is impossible to ensure that their needs will be met without creating a raft of new issues.

"Today's meeting should not lock down solutions without first speaking with energy user groups to understand the implications and impacts of what is being proposed," added Mr Richards.

The EUAA is a membership organisation representing users who manufacture and produce food, packaging and essential items used every day in the Australian community.

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