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Politics trumps facts – Victoria wants gas, just not local gas

The decision today by the Victorian Coalition to support the Labor Government's bans on natural gas exploration and development in the state is the last, predictable act in a political race to the bottom. The price of this decision will be paid by the 1.82 million Victorians who rely on gas.

"Both sides of politics in Victoria have decided to ignore the facts about the gas industry to play short-term politics. Every independent, expert study into the industry has found that the industry is safe for the environment," said APPEA Chief Executive Dr Malcolm Roberts.

"The Government and the Opposition have decided not just to prohibit hydraulic fracturing – the bogeyman peddled by activists – but to extend the blanket ban on conventional onshore gas exploration and development.

"Until recently, Victoria had a successful conventional onshore gas industry.

"The opportunity to create local jobs and local gas supply has been thrown away.

"Over the last two months, the national debate has focused on the economic risks posed by tightening gas supply on the east coast. A supply shortfall is expected as early as 2019.

"As the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has noted, Victoria and NSW – the two States with virtually no local gas production – are the States most exposed to higher prices.

"How long will it be before the Victorian politicians who have banned local gas development turn on the industry to complain about higher prices and uncertain supply?

"Sadly, the Victorian government is not just doing the wrong thing – it is doing it the wrong way. The Government has not just killed local gas projects; it also wants to amend the law to deny investors in projects the opportunity to seek compensation through the courts.

"That is the act of guilty people.

"Businesses have invested millions in good faith and complied with the terms of the licenses issued by State governments. They deserve better."

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