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Prime Minister right to highlight role of gas

The Australian gas industry welcomed the comments by Prime Minister Scott Morrison today on the need for greater use of natural gas as Australia strives to cut emissions and manage the transition to greater use of renewables and alternate energy sources.

Mr Morrison told the National Press Club in Canberra: “We need to get the gas from under our feet. There is no credible energy transition plan for an economy like Australia ... that does not involve the greater use of gas.”

He added: “Gas can help us bridge the gap while our investments in batteries, hydrogen and pumped hydro energy storage bring these technologies to parity to traditional energy sources ... so right now, we’ve got to get the gas.”

Australian Petroleum Production & Exploration Association Chief Executive Andrew McConville said the Prime Minister was right to highlight the critical role gas has to play in supporting increasing investment in renewable energy generation – both in delivering reliable and affordable power when solar or wind generation were not available, and in doing so with less than half the emissions of existing coal-fired power generation, which continues provide over 70% of Australia’s electricity.

“Natural gas has a key role to play, and not just when the wind isn’t blowing and the sun isn’t shining,” Mr McConville said.

“If industry can further explore and develop onshore and offshore resources with support from governments, Australia’s natural gas can continue to underpin a nation building shift to a lower carbon, sustainable energy economy.

“It’s important for Australia’s oil and gas industry to be recognised for the positive role it is and can play in the broader energy and emissions reduction debate. Natural gas is the perfect complement to the growing use of renewables and will continue to be so for decades come.”

“All too often the debate about energy and emissions in Australia descends into an ideological, binary argument between advocates for fossil fuels and renewables which prevents us moving forward with pragmatic and achievable solutions,” Mr McConville said.

APPEA has argued strongly that arbitrary restrictions on gas development in states including Victoria and New South Wales are not only forcing homes and businesses to pay higher gas prices, but they are slowing the transition to a lower emissions economy.

“It is pleasing to see the Prime Minister explicitly recognise this fact.” Mr McConville said.

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