

Blue Mountains Conservation Society Inc



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Nature Conservation Saves for Tomorrow

Ms Trish Doyle, MP

Member for Blue Mountains

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9 August 2023

Dear Ms Doyle,

The Blue Mountains Conservation Society (the Society) is a community-based volunteer organisation with over 900 members. Our mission is to help protect, conserve and advocate for the natural environment of the Greater Blue Mountains. In fulfilling its mission the Society advocates for the protection of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area and to increase awareness of the natural environment in general.

The Society is writing to you to urge the NSW government to transition away from gas as soon as possible to deal with the current Climate Emergency, the cost of living crisis and the health issues gas causes in NSW households.

In the recent NSW elections, the Society asked candidates the following question: "Will you advocate for the introduction of planning controls which will ban gas connections to new residential subdivisions and commercial developments?" You answered YES to this question. We would be appreciative if you could inform The Society what actions you have taken or plan to take to help NSW transition away from gas.

Last week the Victorian government made an important and sensible decision to phase out gas connections in new homes from January 2024.

In NSW, Waverley Council is leading the way by passing new planning laws that require all cooking and heating systems to be electrified in new homes from next year onwards. Waverley Council is being progressive by improving health and quality of life for their constituents whilst looking after the environment and ensuring they will reach their emission reduction targets of net-zero by 2035. Canterbury-Bankstown Council is also in the process of approving a ban on gas fitting in new apartments in their City Masterplan, closely followed by other councils such as Parramatta and Randwick with similar plans.

The ACT passed a Climate Change and Greenhouse Gas Reduction Amendment Bill in June to legislate the end of new gas network connections, prohibiting all new gas connection in residential and commercial areas. The ACT already sources all its energy from 100% renewables. By 2045, all gas connection will be ceased in line with their net zero targets. Tasmania sourced 99.1% of their power through renewables in 2022.

Yet, NSW is lagging behind and has announced the government has no intention to follow the example of these more progressive States and Territories to bring in legislation to transition away from gas. The Society is very disappointed with this announcement and is asking a review of this decision. We are in the midst of a climate crisis, our council is located in a World Heritage listed area and it is the responsibility of the state to protect and conserve the natural heritage for future generations.

The announcement that banning gas being too complicated is not good enough; the government has the responsibility to do what is best for the State and continuing to burn fossil fuels is the opposite, increasing the cost of energy and aggravating our unstable climate at a great cost to the economy and human wellbeing. NSW can and must do better.

There is growing evidence that burning gas in households releases poisonous gases, which can cause adverse health conditions¹. Another issue with gas stoves is that they can potentially leak gas when turned off, releasing methane into the atmosphere. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas which has 80 times more warming effect than carbon dioxide. It's bad for your health, it's bad for the environment and it's bad for your wallet.

With gas being phased out around Australia, it is crucial that the NSW government gets on board to achieve their net zero targets. Phasing out gas and new gas projects is the only safe way forward; the government must listen to the science and take note of the stark warning from the UN that we are starting a period of "Global Boiling" instead of "Global Warming".

With the increase of gas prices around the world, it is more efficient and cheaper for household to electrify their cooking and heating fittings. NSW can follow the lead of Victoria and the ACT by moving forward into a better future with new laws to start the transition away from gas.

Yours sincerely,



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<https://www.facebook.com/Blue-Mountains-Conservation-Society-137594649645830/>

¹ https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jun/20/gas-stoves-benzene-levels-study?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other