

Media Release

The Hon Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Minister for Regional Development

Minister for Agriculture

Minister for Resources



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ONSHORE CONVENTIONAL GAS RESTART A GREEN LIGHT FOR JOBS

The Victorian Government is supporting an open and orderly restart of the onshore conventional gas industry, with the Petroleum Legislation Amendment Bill 2020 passing the Legislative Council.

Production of the estimated resources could generate as much as \$310 million annually for regional economies and create up to 6,400 jobs over the lifespan of these projects.

The south-west of Victoria and Gippsland are the main regions set to benefit, where geoscience studies have located potentially significant onshore conventional gas resources. The prospective Otway Basin already supports a productive onshore gas industry across the border in South Australia.

Industry can begin on-the-ground exploration and development activity again from 1 July 2021, once the best practice regulatory framework is in place. All new gas will be prioritised for local use.

A Bill to enshrine the historic ban on fracking and coal seam gas exploration in the Victorian Constitution is also before the Parliament.

The onshore conventional gas restart follows three years of detailed scientific investigations by the Victorian Gas Program. It found an onshore conventional gas industry would not compromise Victoria's environment or our vital agricultural sector.

The investigations were overseen by Victoria's Lead Scientist, Dr Amanda Caples, who chaired an independent Stakeholder Advisory Panel made up of farmers, environment groups, industry representatives and local councils.

The legislation passed today provides the foundations for improving project transparency and community engagement, as recommended by the Lead Scientist. The Government will now work closely with communities, industry and local government to prepare the supporting regulations.

Victorians will be able to have their say on these regulations through the Regulatory Impact Statement process, which includes community consultation.

Gas will continue to play a role in supporting Victoria's transition to a cleaner energy future, in line with the Government's commitment to net zero emissions by 2050.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Resources Jaclyn Symes

"The work of the Victorian Gas Program gives us the confidence that an orderly restart of the industry can deliver benefits for all Victorians and create jobs, without compromising our clean and green farming reputation."

"Securing gas sources isn't needed just for Victorian homes and businesses – it's a key ingredient for manufacturing. That's why we're making sure all new gas projects are prioritised for local use."