

**The Hon. Jacinta Allan**

Premier of Victoria  
Victorian Government  
1 Treasury Place  
Melbourne, VIC 3002

**21st November 2024**

*CC: the Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio MP, Victorian Minister for Climate Action, Energy and Resources, the Hon. Harriet Shing MP, Minister for Housing and Equality, and the Hon. Mary-Anne Thomas MP, Victorian Minister for Health*

**Re: Urgent Action Needed to Address Health and Inequity Risks from Gas Cooktops in Victorian Homes**

Dear Premier Allan,

We are an alliance of health and equity organisations, healthcare workers and community members writing to urge your government to protect Victorians from the health impacts of gas combustion and rising gas supply costs by supporting a swift transition to efficient electric alternatives, particularly for vulnerable households.

We commend the leadership shown through the *Victorian Gas Substitution Roadmap*, which lays a strong foundation for reducing harmful pollution. However, we are deeply concerned about the proposed exclusion of gas cooktops from electrification efforts.

Gas appliances pose significant health risks, including:

- Cooking with gas in homes increases children's risk of developing asthma by approximately 30%, comparable to the risk from secondhand cigarette smoke<sup>1-3</sup>.
- Gas cooktops release benzene, an airborne toxin that increases the risk of leukaemia<sup>4-5</sup>.
- All gas combustion contributes to climate change, which is a public health emergency. Between 2006 and 2017 an estimated 36,000 people in Australia died as a result of exposure to high temperatures<sup>6</sup>. We can expect even more severe health impacts as extreme weather events become more frequent<sup>7</sup>.

Excluding gas cooktops from electrification continues exposing Victorians to these health hazards. Moreover, it risks exacerbating inequity, as households with greater financial means transition early to the economic benefits of electrification, leaving vulnerable groups—such as those in social housing, renters and low-income residents—bearing the rising costs of maintaining the gas network.

To protect public health and ensure an equitable energy future for all Victorians, we recommend a two-step approach.

**Step 1: A Just Transition for Low-Income Households**

Launch an ‘Equitable Electrification Program’ to provide meaningful, targeted financial incentives, helping social housing residents, low-income households and renters to transition to electric alternatives.

**Step 2: Retrofit All Victorian Homes and End Gas Connections**

Phase out gas cooktops and other gas appliances in all Victorian homes by requiring them to be replaced with electric alternatives at their end of life, with the aim of fully electrifying all households by 2035, in line with current Victorian *Renewables* and *Emissions* targets.

This two-step approach will reduce health risks, alleviate unjust cost-of-living pressures and contribute to achieving the government’s climate goals. Prioritising vulnerable populations will help ensure a fair and healthy future for all Victorians.

We urge you to act now to protect public health and build a more sustainable, equitable energy future for Victoria. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



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| 1. Healthy Futures                                   | 10. Thoracic Society of Australia and New Zealand            |
| 2. Asthma Australia                                  | 11. Sweltering Cities  |
| 3. Royal Australian College of General Practitioners | 12. Australian Federation of Medical Women                   |
| 4. Better Renting                                    | 13. Australian Medical Students’ Association (Global Health) |
| 5. Lung Foundation Australia                         | 14. Australian Medical Students’ Association (Code Green)    |
| 6. 350 Australia                                     | 15. Your Community Health                                    |
| 7. Doctors for the Environment Australia             | 16. Rewiring Australia                                       |
| 8. Climate And Health Alliance                       | 17. Voices of the Valley                                     |
| 9. Asian Australians for Climate Solutions           |  |

## References

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