

## Matthew Guy pledges to keep coal power stations



'I will not allow our coal resources to be wasted': Victorian Opposition Leader Matthew Guy.  
Picture: Mark Stewart

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Victorian Liberal leader Matthew Guy has pledged the party would keep brown-coal-fired stations fuelling the state's energy needs, declaring that he would not allow any more power plants in the Latrobe Valley to close if the Coalition won government.

Mr Guy told party faithful yesterday that last week's closure of the Hazelwood brown-coal power plant was a "dark day in our state's history". He said he would ensure the Loy Yang and Yallourn power stations would continue burning brown coal if he became premier. "I will not allow our coal resources to be wasted, I will not allow such economic advantages to Victoria to be kept in the ground for the sake of ideology. We should be powering our state through the 21st century," Mr Guy said at the Liberal Party's state council.

But the party still backs the government on a moratorium on conventional gas exploration until 2020, a policy Malcolm Turnbull has labelled "reckless". Mr Guy said his migrant family members had worked in the brown-coal plants of eastern Victoria's Gippsland region. "Victoria's post-war prosperity was powered by the Latrobe Valley," he said. "When my mother's family came to Australia she (settled) there; my grandfather was a fitter and turner at the Yallourn Power Station, my two uncles worked at Hazelwood. "Like so many Victorians, they saw the growth and prosperity of Victoria linked to its power generation and its coal resources.

“To turn our back on such large natural resources that exist in the Latrobe Valley for the politics of ideology, to put that before the common sense of jobs, security and keeping the lights on, is another example of why the Andrews government must go.”

Mr Guy later told reporters the party would “have a conversation” with the owners of the brown-coal plants about what kind of support they needed to stay open. He said the Coalition would consider lifting the gas moratorium if it won government.

The party supports a moratorium until 2020 while a “study” is conducted, although it does not agree with Labor that the moratorium should be enshrined in legislation. The Victorian Coalition supports a ban on fracking.

“Victoria can’t have a situation where we run out of gas,” he said. “It is crazy that we are in a state today which has legislated to ban conventional exploration for decades. Now it is going to be banned by the Andrews government, we may well run out of gas.”

Mr Guy also hit out at the Safe Schools and Respectful Relationship programs, saying parts of the teachings were tantamount to “abuse”. He said the Coalition would scrap the programs and replace them with a more general anti-bullying one. “In Daniel Andrews’s Victoria, we now have Education Department officials scuttling around childcare centres, trying to identify if four-year-old boys are rampant sexists ... that’s what it has come to,” Mr Guy said. “To bully four-year-old kids, to claim that five-year-old kids need sex education, to believe that every primary-school kid needs to be taught to question their gender. As a father of three boys ... I think that this kind of behaviour toward children constitutes abuse.”