

Andrew Bolt: Gas scare is just a load of hot air

Andrew Bolt, Herald Sun

September 27, 2017 9:00pm

Subscriber only

ONLY a country mad with green superstitions could run short of the gas that's actually lying right under our feet.

This week the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission warned that so much Australian gas will be exported that we face terrible shortages for our homes and factories.

**PM WARNS GAS SHORTFALL THREE TIMES WORSE THAN EXPECTED
ENERGY DISCONNECTIONS HAVE SURGED IN RECENT MONTHS AS CUSTOMERS
BATTLE COSTLY BILLS**

The ACCC warns this shortfall is at least the equivalent of the gas to supply 55 towns the size of Warrnambool and Wollongong.

The problem may seem simple. Why didn't the former Labor government or the Liberal government pass a law to keep enough gas for use back home? Indeed, the Turnbull Government now threatens to force gas exporters to keep more gas here unless they fix this, even if it means making them rip up contracts.

But there are two other parts to this disaster — two great green scares that most politicians are still too weak to tackle. First, of course, there's the global warming faith that former prime minister Kevin Rudd once proclaimed the "great moral challenge of our generation".

Fear of catastrophic man-made warming drove state and federal governments of both sides to demand that our power stations cut their emissions of carbon dioxide. It didn't seem to matter that Australia is actually too small for such cuts to make any difference to the planet's temperature. Nor does it seem to matter that we've had much less warming than predicted.

Forget all that. Our governments have blindly subsidised wind and solar farms and forced us to use more of their unreliable electricity. Result: those policies have helped force shut seven cheap coal-fired generators in only four years, including the giant Hazelwood plant that supplied up to 20 per cent of

Victoria's power. More coal-fired generators will soon close, too, and no one dares invest in new ones.

But, wait. With all those coal-fired stations gone, where are we getting our electricity from instead? Well, not just from wind and solar, both unreliable. In fact, we've had to turn more to gas-fired generators, which the ACCC report this week said were using a lot more gas, thus adding to this gas shortfall.

But there's a second green scare that's making this crisis much worse — coal-seam gas. We have had activists and journalists falsely claim that fracking — a technique for getting coal seam gas by breaking up rocks deep underground — is so dangerous that it poisons water tables and destroys farms.

Greens leader Richard Di Natale was still at it last Tuesday, attacking the Turnbull Government for wanting more such gas projects developed: "The last thing farmers in this country need are more big multinational companies coming to contaminate their land and water." In fact, a report to the NSW Chief Scientist, which studied more than two and a half million fracking wells around the world, reported no contamination of groundwater.

Former Howard government minister Peter Reith reached the same conclusion in a report commissioned by the Victorian Government: "In the US with over 1.5 million operations of fracking, there is not one confirmed case of contamination of water from fracking."

And Australia's Chief Scientist, Alan Finkel, also gave fracking a big tick: "It's being used widely already in the coal-seam gas fields, particularly in Queensland. "It's being used widely across America. The evidence is that, if properly regulated, it's completely safe."

Yet the fracking scare has been pushed so hard by anti-capitalists, global warmists and scared farmers that weak politicians have crumbled.

Fracking has now been banned in Victoria, the Northern Territory, Western Australia and most of NSW. Victoria's socialist-Left government, typically, is the worst, banning even conventional drilling for gas onshore. And that is the other reason we have found ourselves so short of gas actually lying right under our feet.

It is astonishing that we should face shortages when NSW meanwhile keeps delaying approval of the giant Narrabri coal-seam gas project, which Santos

estimates could produce the equivalent of half the state's annual gas consumption. Same in Victoria. Lakes Oil says the Victorian Government's ban is blocking its Wombat 5 project in Gippsland, which could within 18 months supply 10 per cent of the state's gas demands.

"It is enough gas to basically solve the problem Victoria is facing," chief executive Roland Sleeman told The Bolt Report.

Green scares and gutless politicians have created this gas crisis. Now courageous politicians must call out these scares and save us from these disastrous consequences.

Surely it's better we be rich than stupid.