

LETTERS published in Weekend Australian.

Pledge welcome, but states should revisit bans on gas potential

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The pledge by three big gas exporters to increase gas on the domestic market is a welcome measure to avoid the shortfall forecast for 2018 by the Australian Energy Market Operator. But action should be taken by Malcolm Turnbull to persuade the states from preventing, in varying degrees, investments in the large amounts of gas known to be available as well as the potential gas from fracking. Those recalcitrant states should be subjected to reduced federal grants if they persist with existing no-gas policies.

Similarly, states must be persuaded to cut policies that have the effect of reducing supplies of power from coal-generated sources. The commonwealth should lead the way by reducing, preferably eliminating, its policies that are forcing reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide and requiring usage of renewables. The diminishing supply of coal-generated power caused by the closure of seven coal-fired generators has been a main reason for the shortage of gas resulting from its use in lieu of the lost coal-generated power.

Even assuming the success of the agreement on additional supplies of gas in 2018, the potential for shortages of power from that source and from coal-generated power is likely to continue unless other action is taken.

Des Moore, South Yarra, Vic

Electricity shambles

Don Higson (Letters, 29/9) is right to point out that while solving the potential gas supply crisis is a win for the government, the larger and more intractable electricity affordability and reliability problem remains.

Unlike the gas issue, It is not just a matter of redirecting existing resources. This is shambles, years in the making, a mix of fanatical ideologies, poor science, opportunistic politics, rent seeking, misplaced faith in renewable energy and much more.

Solving it will need a complete rethink, based on evidence, reasoned thought, much of it drawn from the engineering and science Malcolm Turnbull tells us he favours.

Doug Hurst, Chapman, ACT