

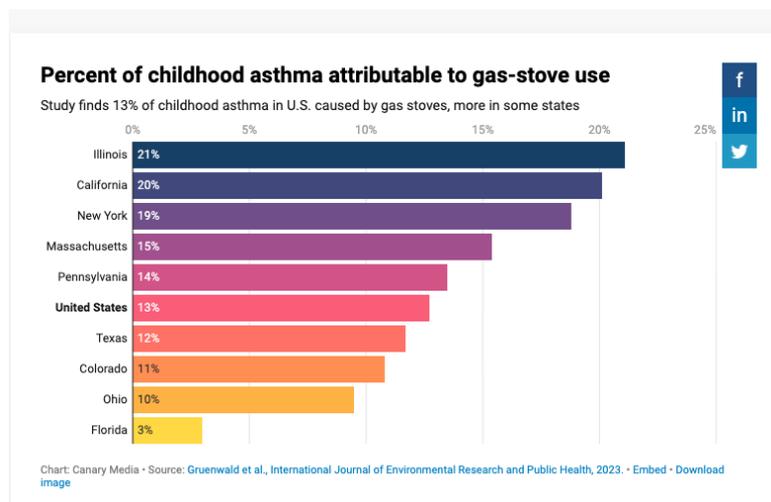


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Cooking with gas on the nose as health concerns mount and governments act

The [US Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) announced last week it would move to regulate methane gas stoves in the US. This is a response to increasing scientific evidence about the toxic indoor air pollutants emitted by these household appliances – including nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and fine particulate pollutants – causing childhood asthma, cancer, cardiovascular problems and other illnesses.

This move reflects [press reports](#) on the staggering findings of new peer-reviewed research published in the [International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health](#), which found that 13% of current childhood asthma cases in the US can be attributed to gas stove use (see chart below).



With 40% of US households using a gas stove, a transition to electrify everything is urgent. And it comes at a time when the US and EU are rapidly rolling out electric-powered ground heat pumps to do away with polluting fuels including gas and diesel oil powered home heating and aircon.

In the US, the Inflation Reduction Act (aka Climate Bill) passed into law last August 2022 includes rebates of up to \$840 for the purchase of new electric ranges as part of some \$4.5 billion in funding to help low- and moderate-income households end their reliance on gas and electrify their homes.

As is to be expected, [fossil fuel shills are lining up to condemn the developments](#) and lobby to ensure they can continue to profit. It was initially reported that the [US Consumer Product Safety Commission](#) was considering an outright ban, but no sooner did the [American](#)

[Petroleum Institute](#) waded in than Republicans mobilised to protect their corporate fossil fuel donors and President Biden was forced to back down. We know who pulls the strings!

The gas con has a long history here in Australia, bolstered by false but blanket advertising by the methane gas industry framing gas as “natural” and therefore innocuous – a clean, green, fast and efficient solution to energy needs. A multi-decade fact-free “natural” gas advertising campaign by the likes of AGL did its work, assisted by a corporate rebrand from Australian Gas Light Company to AGL – Australia’s [single biggest carbon emitter](#) and climate laggard, recently dragged into the present day by sweeping board reform.

But now, the economics of cooking with gas are under unprecedented scrutiny: the Australian gas cartel has ratcheted-up the price of gas by 5-10-fold over the last two years, raking in private, largely foreign and mostly corporate tax free war-profits off the blood of the Ukrainian people, exploiting our sovereign public assets as it inflicts crushing energy price hyperinflation on the rest of us.

The solution is obvious. As [Dr Saul Griffith](#) has been saying, let's electrify everything – including our homes and cars – and slash in half our electricity and gas connection costs even as we do away with the increasingly costly weekly trip to the petrol station. It is the ultimate win/win: we dramatically, permanently lower our energy and transport bills and concurrently cut carbon emissions.

Major moves are underway at the state level and in industry to accelerate the transition.

In August 2022 ACT Chief Minister Andrew Barr announced the [Powering Canberra: Our pathway to electrification](#) plan. New suburbs need no longer be connected to gas mains, and from this year new gas connections will cease for infill developments, with a target to phase fossil gas out entirely by 2045.

October 2022 saw Victorian Energy Minister Lily D'Ambrosio announce [Victoria's Gas Substitution Roadmap](#) for an orderly phase out of methane gas use in housing as part of the state's ambitious net zero emissions pledge. The government estimates that an existing dual-fuel home with solar panels that upgrades to efficient electric appliances can save \$570 on heating and cooling and \$180 on hot water, and conversion to an all-electric home can save \$1,250 pa, in addition to the \$950 saving from the existing solar system. Adding a medium-sized battery can also save a further \$520 per year.

Federally, Prime Minister Albanese and Energy Minister Chris Bowen announced late last year that the May 2023 budget will include funding for homes and business to electrify, as part of the government's [Energy Bill Relief Plan](#), which saw it bring the cartel to heel by capping gas wholesales prices and legislating a requirement for the industry to retain reasonable pricing in the future. The government's move to support electrification was widely hailed, including by groups such as the [Property Council of Australia](#).

Another key development was the October 2020 launch of the Green Building Council's Green Star Buildings rating tool, and the subsequent release of Green Star Homes. These two widely used rating tools have set clear targets for electrification and eliminating fossil fuels from heating, hot water, and cooking. To achieve a world-leading 6 Star Green Star rating or a 5 Star rating, any new building or major refurbishment must be fossil fuel free – and this will apply to any rated new buildings from 2026. And to achieve a Green Star Homes rating, which is a recognised pathway under Commonwealth Bank's [Green Homes](#) offer, the home must be fully electric.

To help with this transition, the GBCA also launched two Practical Guides to Electrification – one for [new](#) buildings and one for [existing](#) buildings. These two guides demonstrate how commercial building owners can gain a capital value uplift as they reduce their tenancy turnover costs by phasing out fossil gas use, putting in EV charging, rooftop and carpark solar and so on.

In a landmark move, in September 2022 major developer [Lendlease committed to Net Zero Emissions by 2040 \(Scope 1-3\)](#), with five milestones to decarbonisation, including phasing out diesel and gas from operations and 100% renewable electricity by 2030. It is also great to see the likes of developer Cbus Property confirm that all of their properties will be 100% electric, leading by example.

Australia's transition to net zero will take several decades, and the accelerating phase out of expensive, dangerous methane gas is a key solution to both the climate crisis and skyrocketing energy prices smashing domestic and business consumers. Ending its toxic legacy in our homes is also critical to ensure the wellbeing of the community.

Fortunately, we are now seeing ambitious, world leading policies from governments at all levels, industry and key lobby groups, building unstoppable momentum and leaving the methane gas cartel increasingly exposed, isolated and flailing in its desperate attempts to continue to protect its vested interests at the expense of all Australians.