

Barnett urges gas over coal for Australia's energy needs

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WEST Australian Premier Colin Barnett says Australia should embrace natural gas for its energy needs and cut carbon emissions from coal.

Mr Barnett believes the country could cut carbon emissions by five per cent by using more natural gas for its energy needs by 2030.

He said today Australia was forgoing the use of his state's vast LNG resources while relying on coal-fired power for 85 per cent of its energy needs.



Clean solution: An LNG container ship carrying natural gas sailing off the coast of Western Australia. WA premier Colin Barnett wants Australia to embrace natural gas for its energy needs and cut carbon emissions from coal.

WA, which uses natural gas for 60 per cent of its energy requirements, could be a model for using cleaner energy.

"A combined cycle gas plant will produce half, down to a third of the emissions from a coal fired plant," Mr Barnett told engineers at the Asia Pacific Oil Gas Conference and Exhibition (APOGCE) in Perth.

"If Australia was to make one simple policy decision, that between now and 2030 half of new power generation - new power generation - would be based on combined cycle natural gas, by my calculations that would reduce gas emissions by at least five per cent.

"It would be costless - no taxes required, no government subsidies required, just simply a policy decision."

Mr Barnett, a former mines and energy minister who has given himself the portfolio of state development, said new gas projects were desperately needed in WA to supply the state's industry and households.

"New projects need to come on stream, not only for security but as a key to our economic development.

"As mineral resources are added to our significant petroleum resources, what this

state needs to do is use some of that gas to add value to the other raw materials, so that we export not just iron ore but an upgraded iron ore, for example, with energy embodied within it.

"That is good for this country. It is good for the importing country and it is good that energy is used here in a cleaner way and probably at a lower cost than in many of the countries that buy our mineral products."

- *AAP*