

Barnett calls for increased gas usage

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WESTERN Australia Premier Colin Barnett has called for Australia to use more locally produced natural gas to generate power and reduce emissions harmful to the environment.

He said that using gas produced in Australia would be easier than introducing an emissions trading scheme, though he added an ETS would be part of a comprehensive plan to tackle emissions.

"Why don't we use our gas for ourselves?" We need to do the easy things first," Barnett said.

"If Australia was to make one simple policy decision, that between now and 2030 half of 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," he told the 2008 Pacific Oil & Gas Conference and Exhibition in Perth yesterday.

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

Barnett also proposed the building of a pipeline across Australia to take gas from fields in the northwest to the most populous southeastern states.

He added that with 60% of WA's power coming from gas, the state could be Australia's model for using cleaner energy. Australia currently relies on coal for more than 80% of its power.

Barnett also said WA needed additional gas supply projects to improve energy reliability.

"New projects need to come onstream, not only for security but as a key to our economic development," he said.

He added that investments were also required to expand the gas pipeline network, particularly in the state's southwest, to provide fuel for upgrading raw materials.



WA Premier Colin Barnett at the 2008 Pacific Oil & Gas Conference and Exhibition