

'Coal is the problem - gas is the solution'

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Barnett pushes for trans-Australia gas line as coal continues to be a problem.

Colin Barnett has renewed his call for a trans-Australia gas pipeline, saying it will contribute to slashing greenhouse gases more than an emissions trading scheme.

Mr Barnett claimed such a pipeline could be owned and operated by the private sector, and built "inside two years", but would need an effort by the NSW, Victorian and Queensland governments to reduce their dependence on coal-fired power stations and embrace WA natural gas instead.

The Premier said the matter had "been talked about" at Council of Australian Governments level. Mr Barnett has long been a supporter of such a pipeline and raised the issue during the state election campaign.

There was "no need" for taxpayers to fund or subsidise such a pipeline, but if one was not built, gas could also be shipped east as LNG instead.

Australia needed to embrace gas as a clean energy solution.

"The reason we're selling so much LNG around the world (is) because it's clean fuel," he said.

"Why wouldn't Australia want its own natural gas in Australia?"

Gas had one-third the emissions of coal, and if governments around Australia made the decision to build gas-fired power stations instead of coal ones, overall emissions would reduce by between five and ten per cent.

"Coal is the problem. Gas is a big part of the solution," he said.

"That simple point is what seems to have been lost in the debate (about an emissions trading scheme). I'm not against coal but why wouldn't we as a country use gas. Right now you've got the world's great natural gas resources off our coast."

While he recognised Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was committed to an emissions trading scheme and "we might as well accept that", Mr Barnett wanted it moderated "so if you go down this path it doesn't destroy... business".

"Western Australia is the state most at risk," he said.