“Future Gas Strategy”

What Stakeholders Said and What the Strategy Reflected

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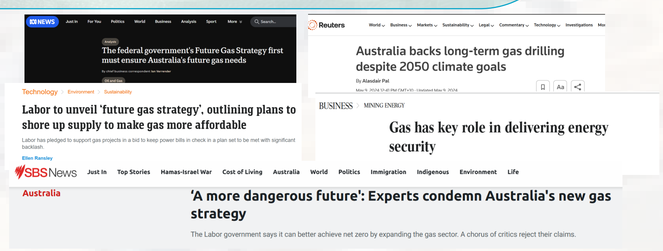
Why This Matters

- Australia’s Future Gas Strategy (FGS) aims to balance energy security, affordability, and emissions reduction.
- Public consultation attracted diverse and often conflicting perspectives on gas’s future role.
- Understanding these narratives is critical for policy legitimacy, social licence, and transition governance.

What this study asks

- How do stakeholders frame gas during consultation?
- How much are their frames reflected in the FGS?



Methods

Data Sources

- 244 public consultation submissions
- 331 media articles (FACTIVA, 2023–2024)
- Government strategy documents & press releases

Who was involved

- Community & general public, Environmental advocacy groups, Oil & gas industry and associations, First Nations organisation, Energy operators, manufacturers, councils, and international stakeholders, Industry, state agencies, community organisations

Analysis

- Qualitative coding (NVivo)
- Media concept mapping (Leximancer)
- Cross-source narrative comparison

What stakeholders agreed on (shared ground)

- Energy security matters during transition
- Affordability is a major concern
- Industrial gas demand is hard to replace quickly
- Emissions need to decline over time

Where narratives diverged

TIME: When should gas decline?

- Some stakeholders: Immediate phase-down
- Others: Gradual, long-term role
- FGS: Emphasises gradual transition, no near-term exit

Disagreement is temporal, not just ideological

LEGITIMACY: *Whose knowledge counts?*

- First Nations groups: FPIC, cultural authority
- Environmental groups: science, climate targets
- Industry: system reliability, investment certainty
- Community: trust, transparency, lived impacts

Legitimacy is claimed in different ways

TECHNOLOGY: *What enables transition?*

- Strong disagreement on **CCS feasibility**
- Renewables and electrification widely supported
- Renewable gases seen as promising but immature

Technology is both a solution and a fault line

What the FGS reflected

The FGS strongly reflected:

- Energy security and reliability narratives
- Industrial and export gas use continues in the near future
- CCS as a potential mitigation pathway

The FGS only partially reflected

- Rapid gas phase-down calls
- Explicit decommissioning pathways
- Health impacts and localised trust concerns

Media coverage snapshot

- Media coverage framed the gas debate as highly polarised.
- Headlines prioritised conflict over nuance.
- Industry and government voices dominated coverage.
- Short-term supply risks were emphasised.
- Long-term transition pathways received limited attention.

Public meaning is shaped beyond the consultation room

Summary of narrative frames in Submissions in support of future gas use

Same/similar narratives	First Nations People (Groups)	Community and general public	Gas distributers and electricity operators	International stakeholders	Energy and consumer advocacy	Manufacturing industries	Regional councils	Environmental advocacy groups and NGOs	Industry Associations and Business Councils	Oil and gas companies	Renewable companies
Gas-fired power generation as a backup/providing firming capacity		■	■	■	■	■	■		■	■	■
A balanced energy mix with all possible options		■									
Continued requirement of gas for hard-to-abate sectors/ Gas demands in commercial and industrial application will continue/Gas alternatives are not mature yet		■	■		■	■	■		■	■	■
Use gas to replace coal		■									
Financial viability to not replace gas appliances		■									
CCS can be a last resort		■									
CCUS to play a key role in achieving net zero/CCS to decarbonize industrial applications			■	■	■	■	■		■	■	
Australian gas is important for Asian (particularly Japan) energy security				■					■	■	
LNG exports continue to have business opportunities in Asian countries				■							
Convert gas supply to industrial use and plan to switch residential use			■								
Gas companies acknowledge need for emissions reduction										■	

Summary of narrative frames in Submissions in opposition of future gas use

Same/similar narratives	First Nations People (Groups)	Community and general public	Gas distributers and electricity operators	International stakeholders	Energy and consumer advocacy	Manufacturing industries	Regional councils	Environmental advocacy groups and NGOs	Industry Associations and Business Councils	Oil and gas companies	Renewable companies
No fossil fuels, environment first/ Phase out(down) gas-Climate action	■	■			■			■			
Not trusting the companies/ Lack of trust in Govt and Companies	■	■									
Fear of distance to the Country	■										
False narrative around gas to shield continued gas production								■			
Social pressures- transition to cleaner alternatives								■			
Future gas strategy reflects vested gas industry interests/ No political transparency of gas lobby groups								■			
The consultation paper failed to cover key gas problems like fugitive emissions								■			
CCS is unproven and not feasible		■			■			■			
Not enough scrutiny on CCS risks									■		
Fossil fuel companies are using CCS as a "smoke screen"		■									
Why need more investments if gas is for short term		■									
Focus should be on renewables not gas/ Renewable gases would replace methane (natural) gas		■									

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