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## **PRESS RELEASE: REGIONAL GROWTH FUND CONNECTS KOO WEE RUP TO NATURAL GAS**

**More than 1300 homes and businesses in Koo Wee Rup will be able to save on their energy costs, as Koo Wee Rup joins the list of towns set to receive a piped natural gas connection with support from the Victorian Coalition Government's \$1 billion Regional Growth Fund.**

Deputy Premier and Minister for Regional and Rural Development Peter Ryan joined Member for Bass Ken Smith in Koo Wee Rup today to announce it would be the latest town to receive a natural gas connection.

Mr Ryan said the connection would be made with \$5.25 million in Coalition Government support which was funded through the \$100 million Energy for the Regions Program, a component of the Regional Growth Fund.

"The Coalition Government has reached an agreement with distributor Envestra Limited, that will see more than 1300 homes and businesses in Koo Wee Rup connected to Victoria's natural gas network," Mr Ryan said.

"As part of the roll-out, Envestra will oversee the construction of approximately 14 kms of supply pipeline and at least 10 kms of reticulation mains to supply natural gas to Koo Wee Rup. Work will start before May this year.

"Koo Wee Rup is the sixth town where an agreement has been struck for connection to natural gas under the Energy for the Regions Program, something Labor said couldn't be done."

Mr Smith welcomed the announcement and said the arrival of natural gas in Koo Wee Rup would mean that households could make savings on their energy bills, especially through the use of gas for heating, cooking and hot water.

"Lower energy costs are also good news for local businesses, with the opportunity for business operators to grow and for new businesses to be established in Koo Wee Rup," Mr Smith said.

Mr Ryan said the \$100 million Energy for the Regions Program was the Coalition Government's four-year plan to deliver natural gas to key towns in regional and rural Victoria.



"We remain committed to connecting natural gas the remaining priority towns including Invermay, Lakes Entrance, Maldon, Marong, Orbost, Heathcote, Terang and Warburton," Mr Ryan said.

"These communities, as well as a number of others along the Murray River, are in line to be connected to natural gas using alternative delivery solutions such as CNG and LNG, as part of the \$85 million Request for Tender which was announced in September."

Mr Ryan said connecting natural gas to communities in circumstances where the previous Labor Government had said it was unviable to do so was another example of how the Regional Growth Fund was delivering for regional and rural Victoria.

"Since it was established in early 2011, the Regional Growth Fund has invested more than \$380 million to support over 1350 projects across regional and rural Victoria, leveraging \$1.55 billion in total investment," Mr Ryan said.

"Without the support of the Regional Growth Fund many of these job creating investment projects may not have come to fruition, and certainly wouldn't have under a Labor government."

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**Note:** "Envestra" is the former name of "Australian Gas Networks Limited"; the Company changed names in October 2014.