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The Australian Financial Review
Letters to the Editor
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Dear Sir,

It would be difficult to convince the community that the scenario unfolding in New South Wales - higher gas prices, an imminent shortage of supply, companies choosing to invest overseas rather than in Australia and our Federal Industry Minister talking of thousands of job losses - is somehow a victory for good public policy and thoughtful planning.

It is odd then that Angela MacDonald-Smith (AFR 7/2/14) is critical of a policy option that has delivered a degree of security for Western Australian domestic gas users while allowing the LNG export industry to grow and prosper.

The latest WA Gas Statement of Opportunities does highlight concern about the uncertainty of supply from the North West Shelf project.

But to suggest the situation facing domestic industry would somehow be much rosier without the domestic supply obligations placed on the Gorgon, Wheatstone and Pluto projects defies belief.

Using Australia's natural gas to drive domestic economic growth, encourage investment and create jobs is clearly in the national interest.

Gas producers use an all or nothing argument to aggressively push the case that only LNG exports will deliver Australia an economic benefit.

The Western Australian experience is that it is not an "either, or" choice and that Australia can and should have a growing LNG export industry along with the jobs and investment created by a supply of competitively priced gas to domestic industry.

The challenge for the current Energy White Paper process is to ensure that balance is met.

Yours sincerely,

MATT BROWN
Executive Director