

Report recommends way ahead for UCG industry

Written by Andrew Cripps

Brisbane 8 July 2013. The Newman Government today released the final recommendations of an Independent Scientific Panel examining the future of the Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) industry in Queensland.



Minister for Natural Resources and Mines Andrew Cripps said the Panel's report made a significant contribution towards government making an informed, science-based decision on the potential for a commercial UCG industry to develop in Queensland.

"The three member panel, led by the University of Queensland's Dr Chris Moran, considered the technical and environmental aspects of two separate trial UCG projects being conducted by Linc Energy and Carbon Energy," Mr Cripps said.

"The Panel's report has now been peer reviewed by a team of scientists led by Queensland's chief scientist Dr Geoff Garrett which has endorsed its recommendations.

"The report suggests Queensland is possibly leading the world developing UCG technology and both companies have shown they can successfully commission and operate their technology.

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“However, neither has yet demonstrated effective remediation of underground chambers.”

The ISP’s key recommendations include that:

1. The Queensland Government permit Carbon Energy and Linc Energy to continue their current pilot trials
2. A planning and action process be established to demonstrate successful ‘decommissioning’ of the underground cavities used as part of the UCG process
3. Until decommissioning can be demonstrated, no commercial UCG facility should be commenced.

Mr Cripps said the State Government had provided in-principle support to these recommendations and work would now begin to ensure ongoing trials provided the necessary data and information to make a final decision on the future of the UCG industry.

“The Newman Government is committed to growing the resources sector for the economic benefit of all Queenslanders – but in a balanced and sustainable manner,” he said.

“Like all emerging industries, the UCG industry must demonstrate it can be conducted in a manner that is environmentally safe, and that it can adequately co-exist with other resource activities.”

Mr Cripps thanked the Independent Scientific Panel, the companies involved and the Chief Scientist for their valuable work in assessing the potential of this new industry.

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“Officers from my Department of Natural Resources and Mines will work in conjunction with the Department of Environment and Heritage to develop the criteria against which ongoing trials will be assessed,” he said.

“I encourage Carbon Energy and Linc Energy to continue working with the government to demonstrate long-term technical and environmental sustainability of their trial projects.”

The ISP report can be accessed at <http://mines.industry.qld.gov.au/mining/underground-coal-gasification.htm>