Media statement

Tuesday 21 February 2012

Carbon Capture and Storage plant at Hazelwood

A Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) pilot plant at International Power-GDF SUEZ's Hazelwood plant represented a significant milestone in the quest to successfully demonstrate low-emission technology applications in existing coal-fired power stations.

The project, launched in July 2009, had provided an opportunity to trial technology which in turn would help inform the economics of future scaled-up plants.

IPR-GDF SUEZ Australia has had the support and cooperation of project partners, CO2CRC and The Process Group, to deliver the Hazelwood CCS project, one of the biggest of its type in the world.

We also acknowledge and commend the support of federal and state Governments to encourage and incentivise the development of initiatives to improve thermal efficiency and reduce CO_2 emissions in the power industry.

It is important that our industry is able to make a smooth transition from traditional thermal technology to the low emission technology of the future. We believe the current power industry is best placed to deliver the research opportunities provided there is business certainty in relation to carbon policy.

IPR-GDF SUEZ Australia continues to look at opportunities for co-operation with other power generators and research and technology organisations on a range of research projects.

The Hazelwood carbon capture project is not just about Hazelwood; it is trialing a technology that could help secure the long-term future of the brown coal power generation industry generally.

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Note to Editors - Hazelwood CCS plant: Background Information

The capture technology at Hazelwood absorbs CO_2 from the power station flue gas using a solvent solution. Captured CO_2 is then transported to the power station's ash water treatment plant where it is used to reduce the pH of the ash water before it leaves the site.

The CO_2 reacts with the ash water to produce an inert and commercially usable product, calcium carbonate, or limestone. This can be pumped to storage environments for commercial application.

The plant currently captures up to 25 tonnes of CO_2 per day and is capable of capturing up to 50 tonnes of CO_2 per day if upgraded. Whilst this represents a relatively small amount of the total CO_2 produced at Hazelwood, it is important to remember that this is a pilot project which involves only some of the flue gas from one of the power station's eight generating units.

However, this pilot project is the biggest plant yet attached to a power station in Australia and it represents a significant step forward in carbon capture research.