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MEDIA RELEASE

Japan invests in low-emissions future for Australian brown coal

Brown Coal Innovation Australia (BCIA) today announced the Japan Coal Energy Centre (JCOAL) had strengthened its investment in a sustainable future for Australia's world-class brown coal resource by becoming the first international member of BCIA.

The reciprocal membership arrangement between BCIA and JCOAL will enable linkages between Australian and Japanese researchers and industry and support opportunities for collaboration in low-emissions brown coal utilisation. JCOAL is a leading Asia-Pacific investor in human resources and technology R&D to support the sustainable development, commercialisation, transfer and dissemination of coal technologies.

In addition to the new membership arrangement, BCIA announced it will also manage the \$1.5 million Japan/Victorian Brown Coal Research and Development Initiative. The Victorian Government and Japan's Kyushu Electric Power Company (KEPCO) have committed \$750,000 each over three years for collaborative R&D to drive innovation in the use of energy resources in Victoria's Latrobe Valley.

BCIA Chief Executive, Dr Phil Gurney, said: "JCOAL's membership of BCIA, together with significant investment by Japanese companies in brown coal R&D, reflects the strong international interest and commitment to a sustainable future for brown coal. Japan is the world's largest coal importer - we have an opportunity to lead the international development of new low-emissions coal technologies and to ensure Australia's future economic prosperity."

The research partnership encompasses three Australian-based projects, examining carbon capture, alternative applications for brown coal and new ways to lower carbon emissions, plus complementary R&D projects investigating high value utilisation of Victorian brown coal at Kyushu University in Japan. The total value of the Australian-based research projects, led by Monash University, is \$1.93 million including co-contributions. Project details are as follows:

- ▶ \$212,000 to investigate whether cheap carbon derived from Victorian brown coal can be used to adsorb carbon captured from coal and gas-fired electricity generation ready for storage. University of Melbourne and Australian Char are also involved in the project.
- ▶ \$238,000 to investigate whether Victorian brown coal can be heated and chemically treated to become similar to coking coal, which is used in the production of steel. Coking coal has become rarer and more expensive as global steel demand has grown. CSIRO, HRL Technology and Australian Char are also involved in this project.
- ▶ \$269,000 for a project looking at the gasification of brown coal and ways to improve the synthetic gas produced to develop value added products including Dimethyl Ether (DME) which is an alternative to diesel fuel. HRL Technology is a project partner.

More information:

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ABOUT BROWN COAL INNOVATION AUSTRALIA

Brown Coal Innovation Australia (BCIA) is a not-for-profit company with a mandate to co-invest with stakeholders in brown coal innovation and emissions reduction technologies.

BCIA funds and facilitates multi-million dollar research and skills development investments to drive innovation in the brown coal value-chain, from mine-mouth to the capture of CO₂. The company's mission is to invest proactively in the development of technologies and people that broadens the use of Australia's world-class brown coal resource for a sustainable future.

Strategic management of its R&D investment portfolio underpins BCIA's innovation support and operational activities. The company is addressing the challenges and opportunities of fostering low-emissions brown coal development by:

- providing a key entry point to progress shared research and development activity between industry, research and government stakeholders
- focusing strongly on skills-development and the expansion of training opportunities to secure the scientific, engineering and trades expertise needed for development of new low-emissions brown coal technologies.

BCIA innovation funding supports research and development initiatives that are technically excellent and that will lead to increased commercial deployment of low-emissions brown coal technologies in the short, medium and long term.

Australia has vast brown coal reserves; encompassing about a quarter of the world's known reserves. Innovation of improved technology for brown coal usage involves substantial costs and time and under-investment in R&D has significant implications for industry competitiveness and Australia's future economic prosperity.

To date, the vast majority of R&D activity in brown coal technologies has focused on power generation and, more recently, efficient water removal technologies. Beyond emissions reduction, current and future international price indications for oil, gas and metallurgical coal provide new exploitation opportunities for the conversion of brown coal to liquids and other high-value commodities.

BCIA's innovation support spans three key spectrums:

- R&D in low-emissions, low-cost, coal technologies and novel, high-value products derived from brown coal
- Skills development and new training opportunities to secure scientific, engineering and trades expertise
- Linkages and networks to foster international collaboration in innovation and low-emissions technologies.