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MEDIA RELEASE

Dr Nikki Williams to Discuss Reality of Carbon Capture and Storage

As climate change is a global problem, unilateral actions taken by Australia will fail to make an impact on global emissions without the deployment of low emission technologies in China and India, says Dr Nikki Williams, CEO of the NSW Minerals Council.

“China is now the world’s largest emitter of greenhouse gases. Unless we have a solution to coal use in China, we definitely don’t have a solution to climate change,” Dr Williams says.

Dr Williams will be speaking on new generation technology for fossil fuel fired power plants in Australia at the Gunnedah Basin Coal Conference in Gunnedah on 16-17 September.

In a pre-event interview, she says part of her address will focus on the reality of carbon capture and storage technology.

“The technology is well established. The oil and gas industry have been capturing CO2 as part of enhanced oil recovery for more than 20 years and storage has been occurring in Sleipner, Norway for more than 20 years. There are 40 other projects around the world involving storage, including the Otway Project here in Australia. There are 13 other projects in Australia, eight involving storage and the rest demonstrating carbon capture technologies.

“However, there are challenges to the application of capture technology in power generation, including the economics of the technology and the identification of appropriate storage sites.”

“The coal industry in Australia has long recognised the critical importance of carbon capture and storage technology in reducing carbon emissions. This is why it has made a world first, voluntary commitment of a billion dollars towards the demonstration and deployment of low emission coal technologies.”

Dr Williams will also address the Government’s proposed emissions trading scheme and will examine the experience of the European Union in introducing its own scheme.

Dr Williams says that the Australian emissions trading scheme “will represent the most significant economic transformation in Australia’s history. The Government has to approach the scheme in a way that ensures Australia’s economy is not prejudiced relative to our competitors.”

“The (mining) industry supports transitional measures to allow businesses which have invested heavily in assets, including in coal-fired power generation, to manage their business in an environment where their competitors do not face the same carbon constraints.

“Australia is well positioned to respond to the climate change challenge” she says. “We’ve got the technology. We’ve got the scientific expertise. We have a very committed industry and the population of Australia is very supportive of the political drive for action on climate change.”

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