Low Emission Technology Australia

FIX THE BARRIERS TO METHANE ABATEMENT, NOT THE TARGET

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The Climate Change Authority's call to fix the technical and safety barriers holding back methane abatement in coal mining is the right one, but a separate national methane target is not needed.

In its 2026 Annual Progress Advice, the Authority finds the Safeguard Mechanism already gives large mines a financial reason to cut methane. What is missing is the technical and safety groundwork to make abatement work on site. The Authority recommends guidance to help deploy ventilation air methane abatement at underground mines, and advises that new obligations should only follow once those barriers are dealt with.

Low Emission Technology Australia (LETA) Acting CEO Damian Dwyer said:

"Miners are already investing heavily in technologies to reduce methane emissions, but safety must always come first. Every project must meet rigorous safety standards.

"Projects must also overcome complex engineering and technical challenges before these technologies can be deployed safely and effectively in Australian operating conditions."

Australia's black coal producers have funded this work through LETA since 2009, committing nearly $60 million to ventilation air methane projects so far. That is expected to approach $100 million by 2030. Projects include a full-scale demonstration at an Anglo American underground mine in Queensland and pilot testing of Mining3's catalytic oxidation technology, which targets lower methane concentrations than conventional oxidisers.

LETA does not support the inclusion of a specific target for fossil methane within the proposed national fossil methane action plan.

"Methane is already counted in Australia's national target, and the largest emitters are already covered by the Safeguard Mechanism," Mr Dwyer said.

"A separate target adds another layer for companies and regulators without delivering any extra emissions cuts."

LETA will make a submission when the Authority considers the design of a methane target in 2027, drawing on its members' work at Australian mines.

"The fastest way to cut methane from mines is for the Australian Government to work with industry to co-fund the demonstration and deployment of methane abatement technology. That is where governments should focus their efforts,"

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ABOUT LOW EMISSION TECHNOLOGY AUSTRALIA

Low Emission Technology Australia (LETA) is a not-for-profit investment fund that accelerates the development and large-scale deployment of technology solutions to reduce and remove greenhouse gas emissions from critical industries like steel, cement and power generation.

LETA's investment in technology unlocks a faster, cheaper pathway to net zero for hard-to-abate industries that are critical to the economy, provide thousands of Australian jobs and support households every day.

Since 2006, LETA members have contributed more than $400m to low emissions projects and unlocked a total investment of $1.1b. LETA members recognise the crucial role of low emissions technologies in enabling a net-zero future for their industries, their customers, their workforces and Australian communities.