

Low emission technologies key to keeping coal jobs while cutting emissions

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Technology to cut emissions will play a critical role in allowing coal mining to continue, Low Emission Technology Australia (LETA) said today, following the NSW Government's move to protect jobs at MACH Energy's Mount Pleasant coal mine.

LETA Acting Chief Executive Officer Damian Dwyer said the long-term challenge was making sure the industry has the technology it needs to keep operating as expectations on emissions continue to rise.

"Much of the recent debate has been about emissions from how coal is used, but the emissions a mine produces on site are the ones the industry can act on most directly, and methane is the biggest challenge," Mr Dwyer said.

"The industry has been investing in the technologies needed to tackle it through LETA for close to 20 years, and that work is now more important than ever."

Fugitive methane released during mining is the largest source of direct emissions at many coal mines, and one of the hardest to address. LETA has invested heavily in methane abatement, including technologies that destroy methane in mine ventilation air, catalytic systems designed to treat lower methane concentrations, and pre-drainage, which captures gas from coal seams before they are mined.

Last month, the Independent Planning Commission's approval of the Hunter Valley Operations (HVO) continuation projects required a staged trial of methane pre-drainage at the HVO South open-cut operation, with a feasibility report and forward works plan to follow where the results support it.

"The HVO conditions show where approvals are heading. Regulators increasingly want site-specific evidence of what can be done to reduce methane, and that evidence comes from trials and demonstrations in Australian conditions," Mr Dwyer said.

"Cutting methane from open-cut mines is a key area of focus. Capturing it before mining is one of the most promising options, but it needs to be proven at scale, safely and cost-effectively. That is the kind of work LETA exists to back."

"The Government's commitment to clearer guidance is a sensible step. LETA stands ready to work with the Minns Government, industry and planning authorities to make sure it reflects the practical technologies available to cut emissions, starting at the mine site," Mr Dwyer said.

"The task ahead is making sure the industry can keep operating with lower emissions well into the future, and that requires sustained investment in technology from both industry and government."

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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.