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LOW EMISSION TECHNOLOGY AUSTRALIA LABELS QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT CCS DECISION RUSHED AND IRRESPONSIBLE

Low Emission Technology Australia (LETA) is disappointed in the decision announced by Queensland Premier Steven Miles today to legislate a ban on Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) projects in the Great Artesian Basin (the GAB).

Chief Executive Officer of LETA, Mark McCallum, said today's decision is very disappointing and puts at risk Queensland's net zero ambitions and the future of the state's critical industries.

"The Premier's decision to legislate a ban on CCS in the GAB is a rushed move that has been made with little consultation with industry or with scientific experts.

"We know that Premier Miles has ambitious net zero targets. On his first day as Premier he announced a target of 75% net zero by 2035. Following today's irresponsible decision, Queensland's net zero ambitions will cost more, take longer and may even be impossible.

"Inflammatory claims have been made about CCS in the GAB and its potential to damage the agricultural sector. These claims have been designed to scare, they are not rooted in fact and I am yet to see one page, one sentence, of independent scientific evidence that supports them.

"It appears that, in making today's decision, the Premier has bowed to political pressure from certain sectors, without full consideration of the science, including that provided by CSIRO, Independent Expert Scientific Committee on Unconventional Gas Development and Large Coal Mining Development (IESC), the Queensland Government's Office of Groundwater Impact Assessment (OGIA), Geoscience Australia and the Queensland Government's own Business Queensland website.

"This result is very disappointing for the future of Queensland's critical industries including power generation and manufacturing. Blocking access to a key emissions reduction technology means there are fewer credible solutions for reducing emissions from these hard to abate industries. This will see their future become uncertain and Queensland jobs and communities are put at risk.

"Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is more critical than ever and CCS technology has an important role to play as part of a portfolio of actions to reduce emissions.

"Around the world, Governments, including in the US, UK and EU, and Australia's major trading partners like Japan and Korea, are investing billions of dollars in CCS technologies to support emission reduction efforts of large critical industries like steel, cement and power. Australia cannot afford to be left behind when it comes to supporting the adoption of this important technology.

"Today's announcement follows last week's disappointing decision by the Queensland Government to refuse the continuation of Glencore's Carbon Transport and Storage Corporation (CTSCo) project. The CTSCo project was independently reviewed by Australian and global experts, including the IESC, the OGIA and CSIRO who concluded that any impacts would be local and minor."

LETA has been investing in low emissions technologies for more than a decade to significantly reduce emissions and support the transition to a low emission global economy.

LETA remains committed to collaborating with government, industry, and our international trading partners to further explore new technologies that will support Australia to reach net zero emissions while ensuring a future for the critical industries that support Australian jobs and households every day.

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BACKGROUND

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is an established and proven technology that is currently being used to abate millions of tonnes of CO₂ every year at sites around the world, including projects in Western Australia and Victoria, and Santos' onshore Moomba CCS project that will soon enter operation in South Australia.

CCS has the potential to capture more than 95 per cent of CO₂ emitted from industrial facilities and power stations and prevent it from being released into the atmosphere. Once the CO₂ is captured it can either be transported to an injection site and stored permanently underground in both onshore and offshore geological formations or repurposed by industry.

The Queensland Government first provided for CCS since 2009 through the passage, with bipartisan support, of the *Greenhouse Gas Storage Act 2009* (GHG Act). CCS activities are regulated under the GHG Act and the *Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) Act 2004*, the *Mineral and Energy Resources (Common Provisions) Act 2014* and the *Environmental Protection Act 1994*.

From the Queensland Government's Business Queensland website: *"Carbon dioxide dissolved in water is not toxic. Naturally occurring dissolved CO₂ is present in high concentrations in certain areas of the Great Artesian Basin. Leaks of CO₂ are extremely unlikely because the geological formations that would be used to store the CO₂ are not open and are sealed by one or more impermeable layers."*

www.business.qld.gov.au/industries/mining-energy-water/resources/petroleum-energy/authorities-permits/applying/greenhouse-gas/about-capture-storage

From the CSIRO: *"Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) is a proven technology that captures and stores or utilises CO₂. This helps reduce the amount of CO₂ currently in, or being released into, the atmosphere. Captured CO₂ can be compressed, transported to a well, and injected into deep underground reservoirs. These are either depleted hydrocarbon reservoirs or saline reservoirs with a porous rock such as sandstone. These microscopic spaces, called pores, hold the CO₂ securely. The reservoirs are capped with an impermeable layer of rock that stops the CO₂ from moving upwards. CO₂ can be stored in these vast reservoirs for thousands to millions of years. About a sixth of Australia's emissions come from industries including cement, steel, and aluminium. These industries can still produce some CO₂ as an inherent part of the production process, even when they are using zero-emission energy sources. Unlike the power sector, these industries do not currently have the same range of decarbonising options (for example, using renewables). However, CCUS is one option that is often compatible and can be applied, either directly or indirectly, to these hard-to-abate industries to reach net zero."*

www.csiro.au/en/news/all/articles/2023/september/ccus-explainer

From Geoscience Australia (commenting on the CTSCo project): *"Due to the basin's immense size and the geology/hydrology of the area identified for the injection, this CO₂ storage project will not threaten the viability of groundwater in the Great Artesian Basin."* (www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2024-04-04/glencore-wastewater-great-artesian-basin-carbon-capture/103564954)