

MEDIA RELEASE

Senator Chris Evans
Leader of the Opposition in the Senate
Shadow Minister for National Development, Resources and Energy

Jim Arneman
Candidate for Paterson

Sharon Grierson MP
Member and candidate for
Newcastle

Jill Hall MP
Member and candidate for
Shortland

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LABOR INVESTS \$55 MILLION IN CLEAN COAL FUTURE FOR THE HUNTER

A Rudd Labor Government will invest \$55 million as part of its \$500 million Clean Coal Fund to secure the future of the coal industry in the Hunter region and across NSW.

Labor's commitments to clean coal in NSW include:

- \$20 million towards the identification of carbon geological storage sites;
- \$10 million towards the planning of carbon capture and storage infrastructure; and
- \$25 million to support the CSIRO research clean coal technologies.

The commitment of \$20 million will assist in the identification of storage sites in NSW for emissions from power stations in the Hunter Valley, this major project is being jointly funded by the NSW Government and the coal industry.

The \$10 million commitment will go towards the planning of infrastructure, such as pipelines needed to transport carbon dioxide to identified storage sites deep underground.

The commitment of \$25 million will support the CSIRO's leadership position in development of clean coal technology and pilot plants in the Hunter Valley. Senator Evans, Sharon Grierson and Jill Hall received a briefing on the latest developments at Newcastle's CSIRO Energy Centre this morning.

"Labor's \$500 million National Clean Coal Initiative has been matched by \$1 billion from the coal industry. This funding will help give Australia world leading clean coal technology and expertise, securing jobs in NSW," said Senator Evans, Shadow Minister for Energy and Resources.

Senator Evans said "A Rudd Labor Government will work with the NSW Government and the industry to bring forward the use of clean coal technologies in NSW, secure the future of the Hunter's coal and energy industries and cut greenhouse gas emissions."

Jim Arneman, Federal Labor Candidate for Paterson, said "Labor recognises the vital role played by the coal industry to our region's economy. The coal industry in the Hunter produces over 100 million tonnes of coal, three quarters of which is exported, generating \$5 billion in export earnings. The coal industry directly employs 9,000 people in the Hunter region and thousands more in related industries.

"The \$55 million committed by Labor to support the deployment of clean coal technologies in NSW is a commitment to the future of the coal industry in this region.

“By contrast, the Howard Government has refused to fund any significant projects to assist in the deployment of clean coal technologies in NSW.”

Sharon Grierson MP, Federal Labor Member for Newcastle, said “Eleven years of denial on climate change has seen the Howard Government spend just \$3.4 million to research and develop clean coal technologies.

“Federal Labor has committed \$25 million to support the CSIRO’s research into these vital technologies. Much of that work will be done at the CSIRO centre in Newcastle which is playing a leading role in the development of clean coal technologies in Australia.

“Labor will support research into a range of clean coal technologies including the possibility of mineralising captured carbon dioxide. The University of Newcastle has been involved in this work which could see carbon dioxide combined with a range of industrial waste products to form inert solid materials.”

Jill Hall MP, Federal Labor Member for Shortland, said “In the future clean coal technologies will allow coal to be used, while producing a fraction of current emissions, allowing Australia to continue to benefit from our vast coal resources.”

“These technologies include the capture of carbon from existing coal fired power stations like Munmorah, which will soon be part of a CSIRO lead project to test the technology.

There is growing interest in ‘hybrid’ energy systems that combine renewable and fossil fuel energy.

Senator Evans said “Labor will support research into combination solar energy and clean coal projects. For example, the Liddell power station has a solar thermal array and in the future such arrays could be used to power some of the stages of a carbon capture process.

“While Labor has a plan to support the development of clean coal technologies and protect the future of the coal mining industry in the region, the Howard Government has a dangerous plan to build twenty five nuclear reactors.

“Possible reactor sites that have been identified include the Central Coast and Port Stephens, replacing coal fired power stations across the State.

“Labor has ruled out nuclear power in Australia and has committed \$500 million to the development of clean coal technologies.

“Labor believes it makes economic sense for Australia to develop clean technologies that will allow coal to be used for decades to come, while also tackling climate change.

“At the coming election, Australians face a stark choice between the clean coal and renewable energy future offered by a Rudd Labor Government and Mr Howard’s nuclear nation.”