

Media Release

December 14, 2003

IPCC scientists gather in Canberra to assess greenhouse gas technologies

Scientists and other international experts are meeting in Canberra this week to review the state of global knowledge about processes and technologies for capturing and storing carbon dioxide to prevent it getting into the atmosphere.

The Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Gas Technologies (CO2CRC) is hosting over the next three days a special meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The IPCC is the international organisation whose role is to conduct assessments of scientific, technical and socio-economic information relating to climate change.

The capture and storage of carbon dioxide is a rapidly developing technology that may help reduce the amount of greenhouse gases flowing into the atmosphere from current major sources, thus slow the build up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and thereby limit human-induced climate change.

The IPCC is preparing the Special Report on capturing and storing carbon dioxide at the invitation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. When completed, the report will provide the scientific, technical and economic basis for international debate on how carbon dioxide capture and storage can be used in greenhouse gas reduction strategies. The report is scheduled to be completed in 2005.

The Canberra meeting is the second in a series of gatherings of the report's lead authors, and further meetings are planned for 2004 and 2005. The report will undergo an extensive review process by IPCC member governments and the scientific community to ensure the integrity of the final report.

Professor Ogunlade Davidson from Sierra Leone and Dr. Bert Metz from the Netherlands, IPCC Co-chairmen of the Working Group on Mitigation of Climate Change, are chairing the Canberra meeting. Dr. Peter Cook, Chief Executive of the CO2CRC is also one of the lead authors of this special report.

Speaking on behalf of the CRC, Dr. Cook said that the capture and storage of carbon dioxide, particularly the storage of carbon dioxide in suitable geological formations, could enable industry to ensure that Australia's rich reserves of coal and gas can be used to produce low emission energy including the production of hydrogen.

"While there will be growth in renewable energy and energy conservation, these are unlikely to keep up with the demand for new energy, so we will be reliant on our carbon-based fossil reserves for many years to come. At the same time we must decrease carbon dioxide emissions. Capture and storage technologies may help to do this," Dr. Cook said.

"One of the big scientific challenges is to develop a cost-effective system for separating carbon dioxide from power station exhaust gases. At the moment, this is very expensive – but we and other research groups are exploring the use of various systems with the aim of coming up with an economical method of separation,"

Dr. Cook said.

The CO2CRC researches the logistic, technical, financial and environmental issues of storing industrial carbon dioxide emissions in deep geological formations. The CRC also researches the capture and separation of carbon dioxide emissions from power stations, gas separation plants and other industrial processes. Participating organisations in the CO2CRC include leading public sector research organisations, universities and ten private companies.

For further information or to contact Dr. Metz, Professor Davidson or Dr. Cook, contact: Doug Holden (CO2CRC 0431 006 044) **Background:** *IPCC web* <http://www.ipcc.ch> *CO2CRC web* <http://www.co2crc.com.au>