

Media Release

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NEW PHASE OF DEEP CO₂ INJECTION STARTS AT THE OTWAY PROJECT

Drilling of a second injection well at the CO2CRC Otway Project in Victoria's south-west has begun, signalling the start of an important new phase of research in Australia into geological storage of carbon dioxide (CO₂).

The Cooperative Research Centre for Greenhouse Gas Technologies (CO2CRC) and its partners are drilling the new well in the Otway Basin, 300km west of Melbourne.

"This well will provide a new platform for our ongoing research into the storage aspects of carbon capture and storage (CCS)," said Dr Peter Cook, Chief Executive of CO2CRC.

"The CO2CRC Otway Project, Australia's first CO₂ storage project, has successfully injected, stored and monitored over 60,000 tonnes of CO₂ since April 2008."

The new research will use highly innovative techniques for looking at how the carbon dioxide is trapped in deep reservoir rocks with the potential to provide safe, permanent storage for many years' worth of global CO₂ emissions. The International Energy Agency estimates that capturing, compressing and storing CO₂ from power stations and industry deep underground could account for 20 per cent of the cuts required to keep global temperature increases under 2 degrees Celsius.

Once the well is drilled to a depth of 1500m, injected CO₂ will be used to evaluate several types of CO₂ trapping mechanisms and refine methods of monitoring geological storage of CO₂. Depending on results, a larger scale injection test could be undertaken.

A rigorous monitoring and verification program will continue for the existing storage reservoir and has been expanded to include the CO₂ stored in the new reservoir.

The CO2CRC Otway Project involves researchers from Australian universities and research organisations as well as researchers from New Zealand, Korea, Canada and the United States. The Project has been financially supported by the Australian Federal Government, the Victorian State Government and the US Department of Energy, as well as CO2CRC members.

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CO2CRC collaborates with leading international and national CCS experts to conduct world-class research into carbon capture and storage. Organisations participating in CO2CRC research include CSIRO, Geoscience Australia, the Universities of Adelaide, Curtin, Melbourne, Monash and NSW, the Alberta Research Council of Canada and the US Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Industry and State core partners supporting CO2CRC are ACARP, Anglo American, BHP Billiton, BP Australia, Chevron, ConocoPhillips, Foundation for Research Science and Technology (NZ), INPEX, KIGAM, Mitsui, NSW Department of Primary Industries, NZ Resource Consortium, Origin, QER, QLD Department of Mines and Energy, Rio Tinto, Sasol, Schlumberger, Shell, Solid Energy, Stanwell, Total, the Victorian Department of Primary Industries, WA Department of Mines and Petroleum, Woodside and Xstrata.