

## MEDIA RELEASE

24<sup>th</sup> November 2015

### COAL TO BIOGAS RESEARCH

Queensland based company Verso Energy today announced it has entered into an agreement with GDF SUEZ to host a 12-month research and development test of Verso's coal biotechnology at Hazelwood Mine in Latrobe Valley.

Verso Energy is testing a new approach to coal processing that accelerates natural biological processes in deep coal seams to release soluble carbon, which can be used as a feedstock for biogas<sup>1</sup> production in a conventional anaerobic digestion<sup>2</sup> plant. Verso Energy Chief Operating Officer Peter MacTaggart said that Verso Energy's technology could play a future role in a low carbon Latrobe Valley, but stressed "this is just a R&D test to confirm the viability of the technology in the field. "

"It is important to develop bridging approaches that allow coal companies an easier transition away from conventional mining," he said. "If we can demonstrate strong performance in this R&D test then there could be a genuine solution on the table for Victorian brown coal."

Anaerobic digestion is a sustainable technology for the small-scale production of biogas from waste, but the use of coal based carbon sources could make the technology viable at much larger scales.

The Verso Energy approach has the potential to generate value from Victorian brown coal in a manner that is consistent with community expectations for the environment. It has been developed to avoid the impacts which have become associated with mining and unconventional gas production, namely:

- **No** fracking;
- **No** application of harmful chemicals to aquifers or coal seams;
- **No** depletion of groundwater levels; and
- **No** burning or underground gasification of coal.

The R&D pilot has been thoroughly risk assessed in a consultative process with Government agencies, and will be conducted on a non-operational section at Hazelwood, pending regulatory approvals.

The attached fact sheet provides an overview of the proposed R&D activity. For more information please visit [www.versoenergy.com](http://www.versoenergy.com) or contact Robert Masters (0413 147 080) or Angus Nicholls (0407 495 644) at Robert Masters & Associates.

<sup>1</sup> Biogas plants are becoming popular throughout the world because of the many benefits associated with them, including reduced loss of gas to the atmosphere, the production of energy, fuel for public transport, industrial heating and many other applications.

<sup>2</sup> Anaerobic digestion is widely used as a source of [renewable energy](#). The process produces a [biogas](#), consisting primarily of [methane](#), and [carbon dioxide](#). This biogas can be used directly as fuel, in combined heat and power gas engines, or upgraded to natural gas-quality bio methane.