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# Don't fear clean coal

Jeremy Sollars | 20th March 2010

THE global search for gas-producing coal is coming to Warwick but it seems farmers need never fear – it's the clean and green variety.

Sydney-based Clean Global Energy (CGE) has announced plans to start exploration in the pristine Goomburra Valley and Mount Marshall districts and at Leyburn within a fortnight.

Company representatives revealed to the *Daily News* yesterday they will go in search for deep coal deposits by drilling in road reserves across the region to avoid disturbing farming land.

While other Queensland regions grapple with the conflict between mining and agriculture, project manager Gerry Briggs issued an assurance that if CGE finds what they're after farmers will barely know the company is there.

Mr Briggs explained that the low-grade coal deposits in our area have no commercial value for digging up – using the traditional open-cut method – but may yield vast amounts of gas using the latest European technology.

If used for power generation, it may even help to cut soaring household electricity bills.

"This is at the very early stage and but the kind of technology we are using is really going places," Mr Briggs said.

"We need to find a resource which is of a sufficient size and at a sufficient depth to control the process.

"I need to stress that we may not find anything suitable in the Warwick area but if we were to, all you would see on the ground is a very small footprint no bigger than the *Daily News* building – basically a well-head and a pipe."

Company documents show CGE has two separate exploratory permits in the region, granted last April, covering Leyburn and Maryvale and surrounding areas, along with others on the Darling Downs in close proximity to the Millmerran Power Station.

Gas would need to be piped to the station, which is just over 20km east of the nearest exploration sites at Leyburn.

Mr Briggs said coal deposits around Warwick, if found to be big enough, could generate gas to use in power generation, as well as being used in fuel production and the fertiliser and chemical industries.

But he insisted the production process would have "minimum surface impact" and would not result in anyone losing their land.

"We want to work closely with landowners and local government bodies to do everything professionally," he said.

"We appreciate this is a beautiful part of the world and it would stay that way."

Mr Briggs confirmed he and geologist Adrian Buck from exploration contractors GeoConsult had briefed local landowners this week about the upcoming drilling work to assure them of its minimal impact.

"We may not find what we need of course but our methods are far less destructive than traditional coal mining," he said.

Simply put, underground coal gasification – the process which would be used by CGE – involves drilling two wells into a coal deposit deep enough to eliminate other air sources.

The wells are then connected horizontally and gas extracted under pressure from one of the holes.

Mr Briggs said the same method had been used in Russia for the last 50 years but had been considerably refined in recent years through further investment and research.

CGE is also searching for suitable coal deposits interstate, with Mr Briggs saying their first project could get underway at a site in Victoria.

Mr Buck said the Warwick region had been explored "very intensively" for coal in the past 30 years.



Gerry Briggs of Clean Global Energy and Adrian Buck of GeoConsult briefed the Daily News yesterday.

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"A lot of companies looking for commercially extractable coal have walked away for a reason," he said.

"The type of coal here is only suitable for this kind of non-invasive operation, which is good because we recognise the agricultural values of the area."

Mr Briggs said coal seam gas extraction elsewhere used a huge area and only "recovered" around five per cent of available energy but CGE methods could potentially recover up to 80 per cent from a smaller area.

Drilling in local road reserves will be undertaken with conventional drill rigs and adjacent landowners will be advised of starting dates.

A Southern Downs Regional Council (SDRC) spokeswoman said their involvement would be "making sure the road reserve is restored to its original condition and where traffic control is required, the company must submit a traffic management plan to council".

She said council understood the machinery would "generally be well off the road".

For more information visit [www.cleanglobalenergy.com.au](http://www.cleanglobalenergy.com.au)



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