

Gaseous fuels can deliver fuel security for Australia

Future fuel security for Australia is a critical issue that must be addressed by informed government policy according to transport gas industry experts attending the Society of Automotive Engineers – Australasia (SAE-A), Gaseous Fuels Technology Conference held in Melbourne.

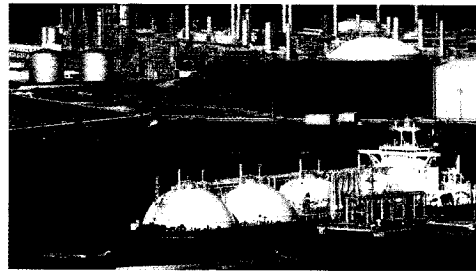
Conference delegates called for the competing gas fuel sectors – liquid petroleum gas (LPG), compressed natural gas (CNG) and liquid natural gas (LNG) – to unite in a campaign to convince governments that gas fuels will provide Australia with a secure long term transport future, while delivering significant environmental and economic benefit to the community.

Speakers at the conference warned that Australia's rapidly growing dependence on foreign oil supplies will become increasingly costly and could be impacted by regional political alignments. SAE-A Executive Director Max Chanter said that future fuel security for Australia is a growing concern.

In May 2010, Federal Minister for Resources and Energy Martin Ferguson confirmed that Australia has 'huge problems on the transport fuel trade front, and also importantly, a real problem in terms of energy security and our economic future by 2015,' said Chanter.

"By 2030, Australia could be importing up to 70% of our crude oil and petroleum products. As global demand for these resources grows, we may have less and less control over both supply consistency and price.

"While governments may recognise these issues, there is no time for complacency. To maintain our economy and lifestyle, Australia must continue to have fuels available at competitive prices.



North West Shelf's liquid natural gas production

"Australia has large reserves of gaseous fuels that can be used now with existing technology to deliver significant environmental benefits. If we can get these gaseous fuels into mainstream use for transport and other applications, they will help Australia bridge the energy gap while new technologies – such as hybrid, electric or hydrogen fuelled vehicles – are developed as medium to long term solutions," he said.

Education campaign

The Gaseous Fuels Working Party, which was formed following the 2009 SAE-A Gaseous Fuels Technology Conference, will also action another key outcome of the conference – direct an education campaign at the public that promotes the health, safety, efficiency and environmental benefits of gaseous fuels.

"The 2008 and 2009 SAE-A Gaseous Fuels conferences focused on updating the transport industry on the technologies," said Chanter. "This year it was clear that we had to take the next step and focus on government policy, standards, safety and marketing of gaseous fuels to make them a mainstay of the transport sector. "While Australia has massive stocks of gaseous fuels, we are not moving fast enough to capitalise on the fuel security, environmental and economic benefits that they offer our com

GE & partners see an opportunity

GE last month announced the launch of its Ecomagination Challenge. This initiative is focused on addressing the world's biggest challenge – climate change, by awarding US\$200m to the best innovations and ideas from across the world that help tackle this issue. GE locally believes there is a huge opportunity for Australian innovators to claim a share of the investment fund. The company views carbon reduction as the business opportunity of the century.

The challenge is timely as the Australian government looks more closely at sustainable initiatives and just awarded \$100m to an Energy Australia consortium, which includes GE, to trial smart grids in NSW. GE believes that while policy is important to tackling climate change, the private sector needs to strongly contribute to the health of the planet and commercial success.

The global challenge invites technologists, entrepreneurs and start-ups to share their best ideas and come together to take on one of the world's toughest challenges - building the next-generation power grid to meet the needs of the 21st century.

The challenge is the largest ever of its kind and is open immediately at www.ecomagination.com/challenge.

The challenge is open to anyone aged 18 years or older and to all legally-formed entities.

Steve Sargent, CEO, GE Australia and New Zealand said: "Australia is in a strong position to become a world leader in sustainable practices. We have recently seen great advances in energy innovation, particularly in smart grid technology, funded by local venture capitalists, energy companies and government grants. This challenge is about collaboration and harnessing the promise of fledgling ideas and businesses to transform our energy future. There is a real possibility that an Australian innovation could win this challenge and we encourage plenty of strong entries from this country."

Over the course of 10 weeks, entrants will be able to submit their ideas via ecomagination.com. Entries will be evaluated as candidates for both a potential future commercial relationship as well as a US\$100,000 innovation challenge award acknowledging their entry as an example of outstanding entrepreneurship and innovation.