

Fuel for Thought

QER's Role in the Orchestra

As I've explained before in this column, QER's goal is to develop a new source of high quality transport fuel for Australia, to help secure Australia's (and Queensland's) energy future.



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Sometimes people ask why we would want to develop a new fossil fuel when there might be other, lower emissions alternatives. There's no doubt that in an ideal world all of us would opt for the lowest emissions solutions available and certainly renewable energy will be a vital part of Australia's future.

The reality is that in a big, spread-out place like Queensland, even with on-going fuel efficiency improvements, there will be an ever increasing demand for high density transport fuel like the diesel and aviation fuel that QER produces. Most analysts believe we will continue to need it into the future to stock our supermarket shelves, run our farms and mines and bring in our tourists. Globally too demand for fuel continues to increase and Australia will have to compete for that dwindling resource.

There are of course fuel alternatives – for example biofuels, electric vehicles, LNG/LPG, coal-to-liquids processes, deepwater oil, and even more advanced technologies like hydrogen fuel cell technology.

However it is widely recognised that none of the alternatives is perfect and each have their strengths and weaknesses. Some important considerations are things like cost; land, water and fertiliser/pesticide use; transport safety issues for more volatile fuels; competition for fuels like gas; the logistics of making major changes to fuel supply infrastructure; and production factors like the risks of large scale deepwater drilling.

In QER's view therefore Australia's transport fuel future will require a mix of reliable, domestic fuel sources, all playing their part, like the members of an orchestra. We think that Queensland's kerogen (oil shale) deposits have the potential to be an important part of that mix, being a rich, well understood, safely- onshore source of retail-quality diesel and aviation fuel. And the good news for Gladstone is that it has the potential to host that industry as it develops, in the process creating many new jobs and making a strong contribution to the local economy.



Creating new fuels for Australia

www.qer.com.au

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