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MEDIA RELEASE

Research scholarships to foster Australia's future scientists

Brown Coal Innovation Australia (BCIA) today announced support funding for up to ten postgraduate research scholarships focused on innovation in the development of brown coal low-emissions technologies.

The prestigious awards will develop the nation's future scientists and are part of BCIA's strategic investment in skills development to secure the scientific and engineering expertise required for the development of new low-emissions brown coal technologies.

BCIA Chief Executive, Dr Phil Gurney, said: "BCIA's PhD research scholarship program is a significant component of our investment in leading-edge research and development that will underpin Australia's capacity to tackle environmental challenges associated with the utilisation of brown coal."

BCIA research scholarship recipients demonstrate the wealth of emerging talent in Australia's scientific community and have the capacity to make a significant contribution to the nation's scientific standing in low-emissions utilisation of brown coal. The company's latest postgraduate research scholarship program is worth \$300,000 and takes BCIA's total investment in research skills development and leadership to more than \$5.5 million.

"Supporting the development of our human resource expertise is critical to enabling the technology innovation that will drive sustainable, low emissions uses for Australia's world-class brown coal resource," said Dr Gurney. During the past three years, 31 Australian research students have gained valuable experience working on BCIA-funded research projects and 12 of those students are now employed by industry.

Applications for BCIA postgraduate research scholarships will be assessed by the BCIA Research Advisory Committee, chaired by experienced research leader; Dr John Burgess. The BCIA Board of Directors will review the applications and award the scholarships; each worth \$10,000 per annum for a maximum of three years.

More information: Mandy Frostick, BCIA Communications Manager

Tel: + 61 419 546 245 Email: mandy.frostick@messageworks.com.au

Brown Coal Innovation Australia Limited

▶ Suite 420, 1 Queens Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3004 Australia
▶ PowerWorks, Ridge Road, Morwell, Victoria 3840 Australia
Tel +61 3 9653 9601 | Fax +61 3 9653 9026 | ABN 51 141 273 261
Web www.bcinnovation.com.au | Email info@bcinnovation.com.au

ABOUT BROWN COAL INNOVATION AUSTRALIA

Brown Coal Innovation Australia (BCIA) is a not-for-profit, member-based company with a mandate to invest in the development of the future workforce and the technologies required to achieve a sustainable, low-emissions future for brown coal.

Established in late 2009, BCIA has received multi-million dollar funding from the Victorian government, through the Energy Technology Innovation Strategy, and the Australian Government, via a relationship agreement with Australia National Low Emissions Coal R&D (ANLEC R&D). The ANLEC R&D relationship agreement provides for BCIA to manage ANLEC R&D's brown coal energy research portfolio.

Australia has vast brown coal deposits; encompassing about a quarter of the world's known reserves. Innovation of improved technology for brown coal usage involves substantial costs, and time and investment in R&D has significant benefits for industry competitiveness and Australia's future economic prosperity.

Previous recipients of BCIA PhD Research Scholarships are: Hirra Azher (University of Melbourne), Karen Little (Monash University), Alicia Reynolds (Monash University), Adam Rady (Monash University), Hui-En Teo (University of Melbourne) and Joanne Tanner (Moore) (Monash University).

BCIA funds and facilitates multi-million dollar research and skills development investments to drive innovation in the brown coal value-chain; from mine-mouth to the capture of CO₂. Strategic management of its R&D investment portfolio underpins BCIA's innovation support and operational activities.

The company is addressing the challenges and opportunities of fostering low-emissions brown coal development by:

- providing a key entry point to progress shared research and development activity between industry, research and government stakeholders
- focusing strongly on skills-development and the expansion of training opportunities to secure the scientific, engineering and trades expertise needed for development of new low-emissions brown coal technologies.

In addition to skills development and research leadership, BCIA innovation funding supports research and development initiatives that are technically excellent and that will lead to increased commercial deployment of low-emissions brown coal technologies in the short, medium and long term.

Beyond emissions reduction, current and future international price indications for oil, gas and metallurgical coal provide new exploitation opportunities for the conversion of brown coal to liquids and other high-value commodities. BCIA's research investment objectives are:

- to advance and accelerate innovative technologies in Australia by supporting focused, collaborative research in high priority technologies
- to retain local expertise in, and attract international expertise to, Australia in support of investment in brown coal-related technologies
- to support growth in skills and capacity in Australian brown coal-related technologies for the domestic and international markets
- to make the results of that research available, as appropriate and respecting intellectual property, to BCIA's funders and to the Australian public.

Funding inquiries: BCIA Research Investment Manager, Dr David McManus
Tel: + 61 (0) 3 9653 9601 or Email: david.mcmanus@bcinnovation.com.au

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▶ Suite 420, 1 Queens Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3004 Australia
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