



Statement from IMETT Group

IMETT Group Managing Director, Mr Ron Brown, confirms the proposed IMETT Project at Norwell on the northern Gold Coast is “back on the grid”, as reported in the Gold Coast Sun newspaper (Wednesday 10th October 2012).

The story, quoting local Councillor and Deputy Mayor Donna Gates, noted the IMETT Project is “definitely back on the agenda and up for discussion, following a recent approach to the mayor’s office”.

IMETT senior management have met with the Queensland Co-ordinator General, as well as the Mayor of the Gold Coast, to confirm their interest and to explore the most appropriate means to work through the approvals process.

Both parties have presented a range of options that are currently being assessed by IMETT senior management, who will also be meeting with representatives of the Gold Coast City Council’s Planning sub-committee in the coming week as the next step in the process. Cr Gates is a member of that sub-committee.

Mr Brown has welcomed the opportunity for more informed discussion on the IMETT Project and offers the following editorial clarifications.

Editorial Clarifications:

- **Impact on Canegrowers**

Suggestions that IMETT’s proposal had caused great uncertainty for canegrowers did not reflect the reality that the cane industry has been struggling for many years, with declining profitability, an aging workforce and the ongoing concerns for the serviceability of the both the Co-gen plant and the Mill.

Such facts have been obvious to everyone for many years, with a CSIRO Report (Future Use of the Rocky Point Cane Landscapes, Gold Coast) released in August 2007 that confirmed there was a limited future for the existing sugar cane industry, and that a study of 25 possible alternative agricultural uses did not identify one commercially viable alternative.

More interestingly, the Australian Canegrowers Association featured the IMETT Project as a cover story in their monthly magazine to growers that suggested the IMETT Project provided an appropriate means for existing farmers to exit the industry.

Indeed, the Council itself has initiated a study that is looking to develop a new strategy for the Rocky Point cane fields in recognition that the sugar industry has a limited future. That study is currently being developed in partnership with the Canegrowers Association at Rocky Point, as well as the Rocky Point Planning Group.

- **Good quality agricultural land**

The story suggested the IMETT Project would result in the loss of good quality agricultural land. The IMETT Project involves only 595 ha of B Grade agricultural land as identified by the Department of Environment and Resource Management, representing some 5% of all available agricultural land at Rocky Point. It should be noted the Mill Owner has sold off a similar area of land for industrial and residential developments over recent years, and has recently requested the rezoning of additional agricultural land that is currently being used for sugar cane production.

The rezoning application is being considered by the Gold Coast City Council and would involve the agricultural land being approved for industrial development.

- **Impact on inter-urban break**

The story suggested that the IMETT Project will severely impact on the inter-urban break that separates the Gold Coast and Brisbane.

In recent years, Council has approved the clearing of more than 2,000 ha of existing native forest country in the northern Gold Coast region (some of which was native koala habitat) that forms part of the inter-urban break. This clearing was approved for residential development and IMETT is happy to acknowledge the necessity of providing housing to a growing population.

The IMETT Project, however, will be taking a 595 ha area of land that has already been cleared of its native vegetation and has proposed re-establishing a botanic parkland environment that will see the planting of more than a million trees and shrubs as part of a precinct wide beautification programme.

IMETT has also proposed the development of a specific new Botanic Gardens for the northern Gold Coast region, with the 30 ha Gardens representing the largest new Botanic Gardens to be established in South East Queensland in more than 20 years.

The IMETT Botanic Gardens will be designed to include attractive landscaping elements that can be found in the City Botanic Gardens in Brisbane as well as Kings Park in Perth, and will be available to the broader community, including the hosting of events such as movies under the stars, dance events and concerts.

Mr Brown confirmed the IMETT Project will be designed to world class standards and hopes to present updated plans over the coming months.

ENDS.

Wednesday 10th October 2012

For more information contact Amanda Fay on 0408 807 870 or afay@imett.com.au.

Please note:

i-METT Queensland Group Pty Ltd changed its name to IMETT Group Pty Ltd in February 2010.