
Australian MPs see how Japan uses our coal to lower emissions, boost energy security

Statement from Greg Evans, Chief Executive Officer, COAL21 Fund

A bipartisan delegation of Federal Members of Parliament has visited Japan this week to learn more about the vital role played by Australian coal in providing energy security and supporting Japan's advanced steel industry.

The visit was organised by the Australian coal industry through the COAL21 Fund and was led by former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and current Whitehaven Coal Chairman Mark Vaile.

The trip included inspections of one of the world's most efficient coal-fired power stations – JPower's Isogo plant – and the large-scale Kimitsu steel plant operated by Nippon Steel.

The priorities of the mission included understanding the integral role of Australian coal in Japan, how advanced technology is reducing emissions and developing a greater understanding of energy policy from one of Australia's key trading partners and the world's third-largest economy.

Significant policy discussions also took place with counterpart organisations and government agencies including lead energy policy department the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

Australian coal is integral to Japan's energy supply and economy, with our thermal (energy) coal representing 73% of imports and coking (steel-making) coal comprising 47% of imports.

Japanese officials emphasised our enduring coal trade links, underpinned by reliability of supply and the premium quality of Australian coal.

Federal MPs on the tour including Craig Kelly, Tim Wilson, Milton Dick, Meryl Swanson, George Christensen and Jason Falinski were unanimous in their view that our coal trade needed to continue and grow, assisted by strong policy support in Australia.

Mr Vaile said the visit was constructive, focusing on coal supply issues, technology advancements and approaches needed to establish a first class energy system.

"The Australian delegation was impressed with the investment and uptake of new low-emission coal technologies as well as the commitment by Japanese policy makers and industry to a strong energy policy with coal as its cornerstone," Mr Vaile said.

"Japan is Australia's largest coal customer at \$16.5 billion in 2017 and our longest-term coal export partner with the trade spanning more than 60 years. It's economically and strategically important to both nations and should not be taken for granted."

Japan is not only a coal customer but is a leading power equipment manufacturer providing world leading high efficiency low emission (HELE) plants and Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle (IGCC) technologies. Japanese power companies have plans to build another 30 HELE coal plants.

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