

COOPER BASIN DEEP COAL – THE NEW UNCONVENTIONAL PARADIGM: DEEPEST PRODUCING COALS IN AUSTRALIA

Bronwyn A Camac^{1*} bronwyn.camac@santos.com, Jim Benson¹ jim.benson@santos.com, Vicki Chan¹ vicki.chan@santos.com, Alison Goedecke¹ alison.goedecke@santos.com

¹Santos Ltd

Up to three years of gas production from Permian-aged coals, in the SA Cooper Basin has exposed them as a potentially sustainable unconventional gas resource. The success of this play is a result of many years of research, laboratory tests and field trials to de-risk the play, following a well-defined road-map.

Since 2012, production variability has been tested in over 50 wells across the SA Cooper Basin. As an add-on frac stage in a conventional gas development well, coal targets are regularly yielding incremental reserve. This is providing an uplift in production and the opportunity to access a new tranche of gas. Production from the coal reservoirs is now accepted as “base-business” for the Cooper Basin Joint Venture partners.

The key to progressing the play from its earliest inception to a productive reservoir, lies in a focused approach to de-risking each economic barrier. These risk factors include frac containment, formation water production, gas composition, permeability, deliverability, completion design and cost.

Next steps are to prove economic viability of deep coal as a stand-alone development. In these projects, planned for late 2017 – early 2018, both vertical and horizontal completions specifically targeting deep coal will be tested for commercial flow rates in existing productive fields.