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Solid steps for a sustainable future

There has been much noise recently around the divestment debate, and what defines a company's credibility on acting in an environmental, sustainable and socially responsible manner.

The debate around the environment and climate change is an important one and as such, it needs to be based on science and facts rather than emotion and spin.

In addition, as a region blessed with a large endowment of natural resources we have a responsibility in helping other countries and economies grow and improving the standard of living for the people living there.

In relation to institutions considering whether divestment is the right course of action, I note the comments made by Harvard University President Drew Faust to members of the Harvard community last year.

She said: "divestment pits concerned citizens and institutions against companies that have enormous capacity and responsibility to promote progress toward a more sustainable future."

"I also find a troubling inconsistency in the notion that, as an investor, we should boycott a whole class of companies at the same time that, as individuals and as a community, we are extensively relying on those companies' products and services for so much of what we do every day."

She went on to say that given our dependence on companies for the energy to heat and light our buildings, to fuel our transportation, and to run our computers and appliances, it was hard for her to reconcile that reliance with a refusal to tolerate any relationship with these companies through investments by Harvard.

I can gladly say that Santos is a company that has the capacity and responsibility to promote progress to a more sustainable future.

Santos is no longer in the business of just producing oil and gas; we are helping to build nations.

It was an honour to be part of the official celebrations in Papua New Guinea earlier this year to celebrate the success of the PNG LNG project – a project that single-handedly doubled the GDP of the entire country.

When I think about how far Santos has come, from the energy pioneers who ventured into Australia's heart in the 1950s and discovered oil and one of the world's biggest natural gas resources, to the company that stands tall today transforming nations and building brighter communities, there is an incredible sense of pride.

This year in particular is very special for Santos as we celebrate our 60 year anniversary. It is also a year of delivery, with our vision of expanding the scale and diversity of the business becoming a reality.

We wouldn't be where we are today without integrating our principles of sustainability, safety and responsibility into everything we do. We simply could not operate.

Our consistent and enduring approach to lighten our footprint and work closely with our communities has paved the way for our success. We have received awards both internationally and in Australia for our record, and have been recognised numerous times by the Dow Jones Sustainability Indices world leaders index and as a sustainability leader in Australia and in the Asia Pacific region.

These achievements have been made possible through the hard work of our people and our passion to continue the legacy of our founders all those years ago.

Santos is passionate about paving the way for brighter futures. We are built on strong foundations of environmental, sustainable and social responsibility, and have the right mechanisms in place to prepare for the next 60 years of gas supply to Australia and our Asian neighbours.

David Knox
CEO & Managing Director, Santos Ltd