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19 July 2005

Australian Stock Exchange Limited
Via Electronic Lodgement

AJ LUCAS SIGNS US ENERGY JOINT VENTURE HEADS OF AGREEMENT

AJ Lucas is pleased to advise that it has entered into a US Joint Venture Heads of Agreement with Comet Ridge Limited and Strike Oil Limited to pursue conventional oil and gas opportunities as well as coal seam gas projects in a four state Area of Mutual Interest incorporating the States of Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico and Utah in the USA.

Commenting on the Joint Venture, the Chief Executive of AJ Lucas, Mr Allan Campbell, said "the Joint Venture allows us to demonstrate and apply our directional drilling expertise in the vast US market where gas prices are up to four times those received in Australia. Given the nature of the targeted areas, we believe our drilling technology will have particular application. Comet Ridge and Strike Oil's US experience and contacts are particularly valuable in extending the Company's activities to the US market".

For further details, please refer to Comet Ridge Limited's announcement attached.

Yours faithfully

Allan Campbell
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer

About AJ Lucas Group Limited

AJ Lucas is Australia's leading specialist infrastructure services provider. It is the country's largest builder of long distance gas pipelines and a world leader in horizontal directional drilling, an advanced technology for the installation of underground conduits without excavation. Other divisions provide gas management services to the coal industry, construction, civil and property services.

Comet Ridge

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19 July 2005

Number of Pages: 3

AUSTRALIAN STOCK EXCHANGE
Via Electronic Lodgement

COMET RIDGE SIGNS US ENERGY JOINT VENTURE AGREEMENT

HIGHLIGHTS

- Comet Ridge Limited (Comet Ridge: ASX Code COI) has signed a US Joint Venture Heads of Agreement with AJ Lucas Group Limited (Lucas: ASX Code AJL) and Strike Oil Limited (Strike: ASX Code STX) to pursue conventional oil and gas opportunities as well as coal seam gas projects in a four state Area of Mutual Interest (AMI) incorporating the States of Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico and Utah in the USA

- AJ Lucas to provide specialised directional drilling capabilities and equipment

- Comet Ridge will manage and operate the Joint Venture through its Denver, Colorado based US subsidiary Comet Ridge USA Inc.

US STRATEGY

As outlined in the Company's Shareholder Update released to the ASX on 25 May, 2005, the directors of Comet Ridge believe that a US strategy will create opportunities for near term cash flow, broaden the Company's asset portfolio, provide greater control of the Company's destiny and will create additional shareholder value due to the following:

US Gas Market: US spot gas prices are currently four times those received in Australia and energy demand, particularly for natural gas, continues to outstrip supply. Cash flow can be established rapidly from success due to the extensive infrastructure that exists in the targeted US States.

Opportunity Base:	The US oil and gas business offers a wide variety and quantity of oil and gas opportunities. The Company sees a window of opportunity to capture coal seam gas as well as conventional oil and gas properties that are amenable to the directional drilling and completions technology developed in Australia by AJ Lucas.
Experience:	The Company's Managing Director has spent 13 years in the US, has a successful track record building oil and gas businesses there and has a large network of business contacts. It is envisaged that he will move permanently to the US by year end and Mr Vic Palanyk, the Company's General Manager, will assume day to day responsibility for the advancement of the Australian assets.
Technology Edge:	It is expected that the Joint Venture will have a competitive advantage with the ability to draw upon the leading edge drilling technology expertise to be provided by AJ Lucas Group Limited.
Operations:	Comet Ridge will have greater control of its own destiny by managing and operating the Joint Venture.
Capital:	The board sees the US as a potentially fertile additional source of capital to fund the Company's future growth both in Australia and in the US.

DETAILS

The Joint Venture arrangement sees Comet Ridge and Strike Oil jointly funding a prospect generation and leasing program in the four states comprising the Area of Mutual Interest (AMI). The focus is on coal seam gas and other unconventional oil and gas reservoirs that are expected to amenable to development with horizontal or high angle deviated wells or multi-lateral holes. In return for agreeing to provide specialised directional drilling services, drilling equipment and engineering technology, Comet Ridge and Strike have agreed to grant AJ Lucas an option to participate with up to 33 1/3% interest, on the same terms and conditions applicable to them, in any prospect the two companies acquire in the AMI.

Geotechnical work on specific prospects is well advanced and acquisition of leases is expected to commence shortly. Initial efforts have been focused on abandoned oil fields that can be re-developed and extended using the drilling technology.

Commenting on the announcement, the Managing Director of Comet Ridge, Mr Andy Lydyard, said "The confluence of Lucas' drilling and engineering technology with Comet and Strike's US experience, contacts and prospect generation capabilities offers all three companies the means to compete in this very competitive but lucrative market. I have worked with the Strike Oil management and technical teams in both Australia and the US for over 20 years and have developed an appreciation for the depth of talent and capabilities that Lucas brings to the table since my return to Australia. I am pleased that both companies have agreed to form this Joint Venture as part of their respective US growth strategies".

ABOUT COMET RIDGE LIMITED

Comet Ridge Limited floated on the Australian Stock Exchange in April of 2004 as a coal seam gas explorer focused on projects in Queensland and New South Wales. Since listing the Company has earned a 20% interest in the Tipton West coal seam gas field in south-eastern Queensland and has established a 406 Petajoule (PJ) gas reserve (29 PJ Proven and Possible). The Company is also earning a 40% interest in the Santos operated Mahalo project near Blackwater in Queensland and a significant contingent resource has already been established for the project. This project is on trend with the world class Fairview coal seam gas field that Santos has just recently acquired from US company Tipperary Corporation.

ABOUT AJ LUCAS GROUP LTD

AJ Lucas Group Ltd is an infrastructure technology company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange with a market capitalisation of $64 million. The Company provides outsourced services to the energy, water and telecommunications industries in Australia and the Asia-Pacific and is forecast to generate revenues in excess of $100 million for 2004/2005.

Lucas is the largest directional drilling company in the Asia-Pacific and a major world innovator in this advanced technology for infrastructure installation.

Lucas Coal Technologies provides the coal seam resource industry with specialist drilling expertise in coal seam degasification and mine exploration. In-seam drilling is a major factor in the success of the Australian coal industry's efforts to control seam gas and establish a safe and productive mining environment.

Lucas pioneered horizontal drilling applications in the Australian civil engineering and pipeline industry and today holds many world records. For the last two years Lucas coal has been applying this expertise to the challenge of surface-based coal seam degasification and surface to in-seam coal bed methane extraction.

ABOUT STRIKE OIL LIMITED

Strike Oil Limited is an oil and gas exploration company listed on the Australian Stock Exchange with a market capitalisation of $23 million. Strike has an extensive portfolio of offshore exploration permits in the Carnarvon Basin of Western Australia and in the onshore Cooper Eromanga Basin of South Australia and Queensland. The Company recently announced an acceleration of its growth strategy by entering into a multi-well gas exploration drilling program in South Texas, USA.

Strike Oil holds a 10% interest in Comet Ridge Limited.

For further information, please contact:

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