



**NEW HOPE
GROUP**

**NEW ACLAND
COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER**

August 2019



APPRENTICE GIVEN A BOOST

TWENTY YEAR OLD HIGHFIELDS LOCAL, AUSTIN RICHARDSON RECENTLY HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMPLETE A UNIQUE PROJECT. AUSTIN IS AN APPRENTICE AT NEW ACLAND MINE WHERE HE IS IN HIS SECOND YEAR OF A DIESEL MECHANIC APPRENTICESHIP. OVER A PERIOD OF TWO WEEKS, AUSTIN WAS GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO REBUILD A DIESEL PUMP ENGINE, FROM SCRATCH.

"I've been at New Acland since 2017 after finishing high school in Toowoomba," Austin said.

"Growing up in Highfields I always knew that I wanted to be a diesel mechanic. I just didn't expect it to be in a mine.

"But dad works at New Acland so I suppose I shouldn't be surprised."

Austin said it was unusual for an apprentice at a mine to completely rebuild an engine by themselves.

"Usually you'd get to strip one down and then another crew would put it together," Austin said.

"So to get to do the complete rebuild was a great experience."

Austin got the opportunity thanks to HEQ Engineering in Dalby.

Joint owner, Jason White said Austin was the first apprentice they'd had from New Acland at their workshop.

"We do a great deal of work for Acland so we know the guys quite well," Jason said.

"If all their apprentices are as good as Austin we'll take many more.

"He did a crack-up job working alongside one of our young tradies, Callum Apelt. In fact Callum was the first apprentice HEQ ever employed so it was good that he could pass on his experience to Austin.

"The two of them had the engine stripped and rebuilt in the same time as two qualified mechanics would do it in."

Austin said it was great to see the engine in one piece.

"I just can't wait to hear it fire up," Austin said.

"It's been a fantastic experience and I'm grateful to both New Acland and HEQ for letting it happen.

"Now I go back to site with more confidence and a lot more real world experience."

MAKE THE CALL

Time is running out for workers at New Hope's New Acland Mine with almost half the workforce facing possible redundancies before the end of this year.

The impacts of these redundancies will be felt much further afield than just the new Acland Mine site.

In this newsletter you can read the stories of our workers, local businesses and community members and how they rely on the New Acland mine.

For more you can go to our Make the Call web page at:

visit: www.newhopegroup.com.au/makethecall/



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OUR PEOPLE OUR COMMUNITY



VICKI

VICKI REEVES OWNS AND OPERATES TWO BAKERIES IN OAKEY AND EMPLOYS 32 PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

"I don't think the town can afford any more job losses, particularly unnecessary job losses," Vicki said.

"I'd like to employ another apprentice baker, but I can't because I have no idea if the mine will get the green light from the State Government.

In less than three months, New Hope will be forced to shed 150 jobs at the mine unless the State Government awards it a Stage 3 Mining Lease, an Associated Water Licence and approves the continued use of the Jondaryan Rail Facility.

The redundancies will have a ripple effect through the community, which has been waiting for New Acland Stage 3 to be approved since 2007.

"Staff will have their hours cut if Stage 3 doesn't go ahead. I'll probably have to lay-off some staff too.

"I would love for the Premier and the Resources Minister to talk directly to the people their decision is going to affect.

"How can they make a decision about our future if they've never been here?"

"Unfortunately, it feels like if you live west of Ipswich, you don't matter to the State Government."



HEQ

HEQ Services in Dalby is one of the town's largest employers, but will have to shed 20 per cent of its workforce unless the State Government green lights Stage 3 of New Acland Mine.

HEQ Services Managing Director Jason White said a quarter of his staff work at New Acland Mine every day.

"We have 78 local employees. If the State Government doesn't approve the mine expansion by 1 September, we could be forced to cut at least 16 jobs," Jason said.

"We have four contractors who rely solely on the New Acland Mine for their income. They'll be also be out of work and looking for jobs.

"We love Dalby and the local community and desperately want to stay, but if Stage 3 doesn't get the go-ahead, we'll be forced to relocate the business further north and closer to a mine with a future.

"Everyone is feeling the uncertainty. Life is on hold until we have some certainty around the future of the mine."



CLINTON

Clinton Ruhle celebrated his tenth anniversary at New Acland Mine by investigating job opportunities in Western Australia.

The mine operator is facing an uncertain future and may be forced to move away from family and friends unless the State Government green lights Stage 3 of New Acland Mine.

"I grew up in the area and all I ever wanted to do was work at the local mine, however the dream has become a nightmare because of the uncertainty," Clinton said.

"My fiancé, Samantha and I want to buy a house, but the doubt surrounding Stage 3 of New Acland Mine means everything is on hold.

"The last thing we want to do is relocate to the other side of the country and force our nine-year-old son and six-year-old daughter to leave their friends at Oakey."



CARLA

Carla Tierney founded IDance Studios 15 years ago and employs five locals.

"If the parents of my students lose their jobs at New Acland Mine, the first thing they'll do is cut extracurricular activities like dance," Carla said.

"Without kids, I don't have a business.

"I'll be forced to cut hours or even lay off staff.

"With fewer students I'll have to relocate to a smaller venue, which would be disastrous given the recent expense of renovating our current dance hall.

"The community is sick and tired of waiting. We need a decision from the State Government so we can get on with our lives and have some certainty about the future."



FIONA

Clinton and Fiona Ireland's engineering business, Ireland Engineering, employs two full-time staff, six casuals and 25 sub-contractors and has been providing a range of services to New Hope for the past 12 years.

"Our biggest concern is the staff. We can't provide future opportunities for them unless Stage 3 goes ahead," Fiona said.

"It's very stressful and very worrying. We won't be able to offer any work to our casuals or sub-contractors unless Stage 3 is approved by the State Government by 1 September.

"It's a very grim outlook, but unfortunately not uncommon in the region at the moment."



ANDY

After 15 years at New Acland, Andy Scouller, the Coal Handling and Preparation Plant Manager and part-time firefighter, is facing an uncertain future.

"New Hope first sought approvals for New Acland Stage 3 back in 2007. We've effectively been in limbo for the past 12 years," Andy said.

"It's frustrating an Australian company, that is an active member of the community and supports local people and local businesses, is having such a hard time getting the approvals it needs.

"I have four children at school locally. My six-year-old and eight-year-old daughters regularly ask what's happening to my job. The constant uncertainty is definitely impacting families and is having a ripple effect through the community.

"It's ridiculous, but if Stage 3 of New Acland Mine is not approved my family and I will be forced to relocate. The Pittsworth Fire Brigade will also be without a firefighter."



COOPS

Coops Queensland provides construction, earthworks and maintenance services to New Hope and is another local business facing a bleak future.

Founder and owner Dave Cooper said 80 per cent of his business comes from New Hope.

"The New Acland Mine is the backbone of the community and the backbone of my business," Dave said.

"They fund local initiatives, help social groups, support the local hospital and fire brigade. I can't think of one organisation in the region that isn't better as a result of New Hope and the New Acland Mine.

"I employ 32 locals, and the uncertainty is killing them because I can't guarantee they'll have jobs at Christmas."



JODI

Jodi Keane-Venz fears for the well-being of her family unless the State Government green lights Stage 3 of New Acland Mine.

Her husband (John) and son (Zane) are both diesel fitters at the mine and face an uncertain future.

Jodi, a hairdresser, has spent the past 40 years in the region, but is struggling to see a future locally, unless the Government approves the expansion of the mine.

"There is no security in Oakey at the moment," Jodi said.

"Life is on hold and no one is spending any money. They're saving it in case their husband or son is tapped on the shoulder and asked to take a redundancy."



TRACEY

Tracey Tierney employs six locals and has owned Oakey Real Estate for the past 21 years.

"Sales are down 80 per cent in the past five years because of the uncertainty surrounding the future of New Acland Stage 3," Tracey said.

"I used to sell six homes a month in Oakey. Now I'm lucky if I sell one a month in town.

"The Government's dithering has sucked the stability out of the region and it's affecting everyone in the community.

"There's no confidence and no spending. Every employer I speak to is struggling with uncertainty."



BODIE

Bodie Sherrington was born in Dalby and raised at Pittsworth, less than 45 minutes from New Hope's New Acland Mine.

Despite strong family ties to the region, and ten years' experience at New Hope, Bodie is currently exploring job opportunities in North Queensland.

The Senior Mining Engineer is facing an uncertain future and may be forced to move away from family and friends unless the State Government green lights Stage 3 of New Acland Mine.

"My ambition is to stay in the region, but the future is becoming more and more clouded by the day," Bodie said.

"New Acland allows me to live and work in a region I love, and return home to my wife, Abby, and 12-week-old daughter, Isla, every night. That future is in jeopardy if I'm forced to move to North Queensland or New South Wales or become a FIFO worker.

"People underestimate how many locals New Acland Mine employs and how much money it injects into the economy."

NEW ACLAND STAGE 3

HOW LONG IS TOO LONG?

NEW ACLAND COAL MINE (NAC) HAS BEEN IN OPERATION SINCE 2002. ON MAY 25, 2007, NAC LODGED AN APPLICATION FOR THE STAGE 3 EXPANSION (THE PROJECT) AFTER THE COORDINATOR-GENERAL HAD DECLARED IT A “SIGNIFICANT PROJECT”.

Over the ensuing years, NAC re-designed the Project to substantially reduce the size and impact of the mine in response to community and government feedback. This saw the exclusion of the Acland town area, Tom Doherty Park, the Acland War Memorial and the Acland No 2 Colliery from the mining lease, relocating the train load out facility from Jondaryan to an area on the mining lease, avoiding diversion of Lagoon Creek, and ensuring that the closest point of mining was 10km away from the township of Oakey.

On 19 December 2014, the Coordinator-General's Report approved the Project proceeding. Since then, the Project has been tied up in legal proceedings.

The original Land Court hearing, which started in March 2016, spanned well over 1 year and involved a 17 week hearing, which was the longest hearing in Queensland (and most probably Australian) mining history.

The negative decision of the Land Court in that matter, delivered in May 2017, was ultimately set aside by the Supreme Court and the mining lease applications (MLAs) and environmental authority (EA) amendment applications were remitted back to the Land Court for a new hearing in October 2018.

The Land Court President recommended that the MLAs and EA amendment application be approved. The EA amendment application was approved on 12 March 2019. Decisions are yet to be made on the MLAs.

An appeal was lodged with the Court of Appeal against the Supreme Court's 2018 decision to set aside the original Land Court decision. The Court of Appeal has not yet made a decision. An application for an associated water licence (AWL) was made on 3 October 2017. A decision awaits.

CONSEQUENCES OF DELAYS

The delays have meant that the available coal within the existing mine is close to being fully exhausted.

Given these ongoing delays, NAC is now in a position that it has planned a “ramp down” of mining at New Acland. It is currently anticipated that this will involve approximately 150 direct employee jobs being made redundant in late October 2019.

In addition to this, the ramp down will put at risk a significant portion of the 500 contractors currently employed at the Mine.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

The economic benefits of the Project have been demonstrated and well documented:

- In the Coordinator-General's Report, it was concluded that the Project would deliver significant economic benefits to the local, regional and State economies. It also acknowledged the employment benefits that would be generated by the Project, in the form of direct and indirect jobs, local, regional and Indigenous employment opportunities.

- Similarly, the Land Court accepted that there would be significant positive economic impacts for the local region, the State and the nation generated by the Project.
- In 2017, Ernst & Young (EY) reported the economic impacts associated with the Project proceeding (or not proceeding). The headline results of the EY Report concluded that the Project would contribute up to \$8.1 billion to the economy.

COMMUNITY AND WIDER BENEFIT

NAC Stage 3 will provide a significant investment in the local community, the region and State.

- The Project will enable the protection of existing jobs reliant on the mine and will create significant additional employment.
- There are currently in excess of 700 jobs (employees and contractors) reliant on the Mine for direct employment.
- The Project is predicted to generate additional jobs, including a further 260 people to be employed during the peak construction phase of the Project.
- The Project will ensure the continued viability of the West Moreton Rail System, not only for coal transport, but also importantly for agricultural use.
- The Project ensures the continued operation of the Wetalla Water Pipeline, which represents \$10 million annually in revenue for the Toowoomba Regional Council.

THE FUTURE

Time is running out for workers at New Hope's New Acland Mine with almost half the workforce facing possible redundancies before the end of this year.

In the event that key approvals for the Project are granted by 1 September 2019,

the planned ramp down of mining and redundancies can be reconsidered. Should that not be the case, employees directly affected by the redundancies would need to be notified by approximately mid-September 2019.

12 years of uncertainty is long enough, particularly for New Hope's loyal employees and the wider community who rely on New Hope and New Acland to make ends meet.

CONTACT

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New Hope has prepared this newsletter to keep the community informed about the New Acland mine operations and initiatives.