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Letter to the Editor, Bundaberg Today

Dear Editor

Fox Resources reiterates that no decision has been made on the location of its potential steel-making coal mine north-west of Bundaberg, with the company subject to a multi-year regulatory assessment process applied to every other proposed resource project in Queensland.

The project is currently at an exploration stage, with Fox Resources committed to pursuing a project that puts priority on local employment and businesses while sustainably co-existing with agriculture, other land uses and the environment.

Under Fox Resources' Mineral Development Licence (MDL) 3040 application, the company is seeking to drill five bore holes for exploration purposes. All drilling will be conducted in accordance with government regulations concerning health and safety and environmental management.

Despite repeated attempts by Mr Corbett (Bundaberg Today, 24 May 2024), Fox Resources completely rejects uninformed speculation regarding the potential location of a new mine near Bundaberg. The company is at the MDL stage of resource appraisal, which is not a mining lease. The process for project assessment has not even started and it could take up to a decade before any decision to go ahead.

Like any other resource project, Fox Resources' project will be subject to a full environmental impact statement process through the Queensland and Australian Government regulatory bodies. The process is extensive and covers all aspects of the project including water, noise and dust, and it includes multiple opportunities for community and public comment.

All Fox Resources is seeking is a fair go – to be treated the same as any other exploration company. We are adhering to the government process and expect to be regulated the same way as any other mineral exploration company.

Queensland's Department of Resources has three phases that all exploration companies must adhere to.

The first phase is the Exploration Licence Contract EPC. Once a company has conducted exploration drilling, and proved that coking coal is present, it can then apply to proceed to the next phase which is the Mineral Development Licence phase.

Further drilling is then carried out and if the results justify further investigation, the company applies for a Mining Lease. Under a Mining Lease the company must complete detailed mine designs, mine plans, environmental studies, water studies, and any other studies required under the State and Federal legislation.

Currently Fox Resources is in the process of applying for a Mineral Development Licence, MDL 3040. The Department of Resources will only allow Fox to drill five drill holes and complete some technical studies during this MDL 3040 phase.

No mining design or mine plan or environmental plan is required at this MDL phase, because if the drill results are not satisfactory the project stops. This is why Fox is not able to make any decision on the location of the mine's anticipated 120-hectare surface area.

The EPBC phase takes approximately three to six years to complete, the MDL 3040 phase will take approximately two to three years to complete, and the Mining Lease will take approximately three years to complete.

Accordingly, Fox Resources confirms that **no** decision has been made on a location for the 120-hectare surface area footprint.

Unfortunately, there are certain groups and individuals who are deliberately spreading misinformation about the coking coal project. Firstly, this group stated that the project was going to be an open pit mine, even though the Department of Resources made it clear that the mine had to be an underground mine, using the bord and pillar mining method.

Then they raised the misinformation that coking coal dust was going to be a problem at Moore Park. Firstly, Moore Park is approximately 10 kms from the tenement, the wind blows easterly and southeasterly, so it is impossible for any coking coal dust if there was any to reach Moore Park.

In addition, the current legislation has strict guidelines on dust emissions, and there are heavy fines, and the operation is closed if these guidelines are not met. The same applies to groundwater, the operation will only use water that is unfit for human, animal or agriculture use. Any operating mine must comply with strict environmental and mining legislation including Occupational Health and Safety, water regulations, and any other legislation.

Fox Resources is focused on advancing the project in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Department of Resources - a step-by-step process that ensures proper scrutiny.

Fox Resources has been keen to engage the community and its elected representatives on the facts of the MDL application and assessment process the project would be required to go through before a mining lease can be granted.

That is why we established a Regional Reference Group and called for members from the community to serve on the Group. I am pleased to say we have a cross-section of the local community with agricultural, small business, landholding, First Nations, water users and distributors and employee interests represented.

Bruce Garlick
Executive Director, Fox Resources Limited