



Mayor under fire as council backs farming over new coal mine

STATEWIDE

The battle between agriculture and mining is heating up after the State Government accused Bundaberg's mayor of hypocrisy and grandstanding over the council's opposition to a proposed coal project.



Bundaberg Mayor and former LNP MP Jack Dempsey has been accused of hypocrisy

The dispute revolves around Fox Resources' application to the State Government for a mineral development licence for a coking coal project, north of the city that has a long history and association with agriculture. The MDL is effectively an upgraded exploration lease and does not allow mining.



the Gate.

The Bundaberg Regional Council, supported by former LNP MP and now mayor Jack Dempsey, passed a motion put forward by Councillor Jason Bartels opposing the project.

On the council-owned news website, Dempsey said he had written to Mines Minister Anthony Lynham setting out his opposition to the project.

“If the licence application were approved it would allow Fox Resources to use seismic survey and drill important agricultural land in search of coking and metallurgical coal over a period of five to 10 years,” Dempsey said.

“There are significant environmental issues that would arise from coal mining, including impacts on water, flora and fauna that would have long-lasting detriment to our region.

“I’ve conveyed council’s position to the Minister, that we oppose coal mining in parts of the Bundaberg Region that have high-value agriculture or tourism and environmental sensitivity.”

But Lynham has hit back.

“It’s the height of hypocrisy for Mayor Jack Dempsey to be objecting to resources proposals,” Lynham said.

“When he sat in the Newman Cabinet he was one of the loud voices that took away the community’s right to object to a mining lease.

“If he and his LNP colleagues were still in government, the people of Bundaberg would not be able to object.

“This is nothing more than some post-local government election grandstanding.



“Our \$60 billion food and fibre industry has thrived alongside our resources sector for decades, and under this government’s responsible and balanced laws it will continue to do so.”

The council’s opposition is ahead of the normal process for public objections which occur if and when a mining lease or environmental authority is applied for. The objections would then be heard by the Land Court.

Lock the Gate Wide Bay spokesperson Vicki Perrin said it was great to see local politicians standing up for their community.

“What we need now is for the Queensland Palaszczuk Government to recognise that Bundaberg is absolutely no place for a dirty great coal mine,” she said.

“Fox Resources, or any other company, should never have been allowed to apply for a mineral development licence over such valuable prime agricultural land.

“It is unthinkable that one of the major food bowls of Australia should be threatened in this way.”

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