

Mines getting too close for comfort

EDITORIAL

By ANNA ROLFE
and JACOB CHEERS

COALMINES in the Upper Hunter supply jobs, bring money into the community and supply the energy we need for our day-to-day lives. But are they too close?

Coalmines need to be further away from citizens' homes and farms as they are buying out our prime agricultural land and digging it up, instead of digging up land that is not being used.

The mines are eating up all that quality agricultural land and leaving most farmers with cash.

However the family farm legacy – all their hard work, their love of the land and their animals – is gone for good.

Wineries and food industries are also affected. Local food product industries are going down in quality because of the poor air composition infecting produce.

The horse racing industry, which also produces billions of dollars for the Australian economy, is against the coalmines polluting our air. This industry is particularly important to Scone, known as the "horse capital of Australia".

Why should their needs, like land for studs and healthy racing conditions, be any less important? Not only is our produce and

other local industries at risk, but so are we. Mine dust can cause and/or aggravate many diseases such as lung cancer, chronic bronchitis and can bring on asthma attacks.

These diseases can reduce the quality of life for many adults and children who are exposed to this dust in the air.

The mines that are too close to town cause traffic and road hazards with extremely wide loads and over-sized trucks coming and going, delaying traffic flow.

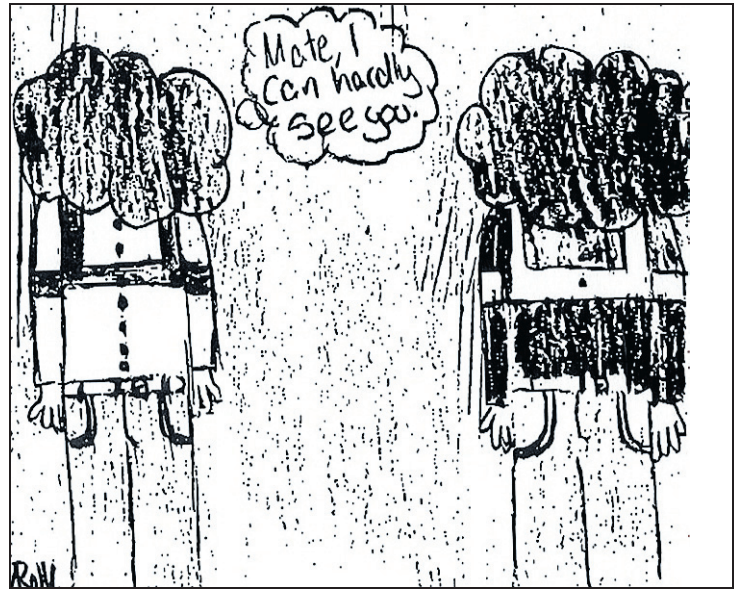
Regular road closures by the mines to perform blasting operations cause more dust and inconvenience the community, who are forced to find an alternative route.

If the mines were further away from town, local people would not be as interrupted in their daily business by traffic issues.

One may say "but what about all the local jobs the mining industry provides? Surely that is a good thing for the local community". We would agree with you. But the mine itself does not need to be sitting on top of a town.

Health risks, inconvenience and the destruction of local values such as agriculture could all be reduced by simply moving the mines further away from where houses and buildings exist.

Although this increases the commute for mine workers, it decreases many negative impacts of the industry. We need to start standing up for what is important to us as a local community.



Cartoon: Anna Rolfe

Swinger with a golden style

By HENRY BARNETT

GOLF is becoming more popular in the Hunter region and with it new stars are rising.

Recent winners include Nathan Waters or Billy Fenton but a young newcomer, Will Barnett, is here to change the game.

Will is a member at Scone Golf Club and Long Reef Golf Club, a major course up against some of the best clubs like The Australian.

He has taken the title of the major pennant player of the year for Long Reef Golf Club for both 2012 and 2013.

This is a very prestigious award as pennants is a huge team event having the same play style as the Ryder Cup.

Will unofficially broke a course record of seven under par at Scone Golf Club, previously held by Nathan Waters.

With two under par on the front, and six under on the back, Will had an exceptional round finishing with an amazing score of eight under par, astounding members and players.

Will has a number of



EYE ON THE BALL: Will Barnett in action on the golf course.
Picture: Henry Barnett

achievements such as the Long Reef junior medal and a place in the NSW junior elite squad – who train and play in teams against other states and territories.

When asked about

his golf, Will said: "I started when I was 8 because I found it fun and started taking golf seriously when I was 11. I hope to one day get into a college in America and play on the PGA circuit."

Pup owners pushed by parvovirus

By BRONTE SHAGEN
and CASSIDY GEPP

THE Upper Hunter has had a significant parvovirus outbreak, killing many unvaccinated dogs.

Pet Medical in Muswellbrook has recorded more than 100 suspected cases of the virus. Dogs affected become severely depressed and dehydrated. They vomit and pass large quantities of bloody diarrhoea. Around 10 per cent of affected animals will die regardless of treatment with this figure higher in puppies. Most untreated animals die.

The animals are nursed in a special isolation unit and treatment is expensive, costing over \$1000 in severe cases.

Many of the affected puppies were vaccinated between the ages of 6-8 weeks, however they have only had one of the three doses required to provide lasting immunity to the virus.

After 16 weeks of age a puppy will have immunity for roughly 12 months with a single vaccination. Dogs should be revaccinated every year.

Treating the disease requires a huge amount of dedication from the vets and vet-nurses.

This virus will survive in the environment for well over a year and people can walk it around on shoes and clothing, spreading it to other dogs.

Puppy owners are being urged to ensure their dogs have updated vaccinations.

A different relay for survivors and fighters

By HARMONY O'BRIEN,
LAURA POOLE and
BAILEY ELLIS

RELAY For Life is an overnight community event where teams of 10-15 people participate in a relay-style walk or run to help raise funds for the Cancer Council.

The event brings the whole community together for a night of fun, entertainment, celebration and remembrance.

Muswellbrook's Relay For Life event commenced at 2pm on Saturday, April



FUND-RAISING FAMILY: The Brown family supporting Relay For Life.
Picture: Bailey Ellis

20, at Weeraman Field.

The first lap honoured cancer survivors and

carers, who took to the track proudly wearing their sashes.

Some people did it in memory of a loved one who has passed away due to cancer.

Some people did it to show how proud they are for having survived cancer.

Some used it to show they are strong enough to beat cancer.

And some just wanted to be involved and make a difference.

Everyone was able to participate; there were no restrictions.

Relay For Life is about getting involved, regardless of your motivation.

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