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## WEST COAST MINING WILL HELP CONSERVATION

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By Hamish Bohannan



Protecting New Zealand's conservation estate and unique biodiversity is something we all care about deeply, but is an ongoing battle and resources are limited.

Nicola Vallance of the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society is right to bring this problem to the fore.

The crux of the matter is that generally only wealthy nations can afford to look after their environments. New Zealand can be wealthier, but only if we are smarter about using our resources to benefit everyone, including the conservation estate.

New Zealand coal operator Bathurst Resources wishes to establish a coal mine on the Denniston Plateau, near Westport, which will provide 225 well paid jobs in a region known for its proud mining history.

We will operate the open cast mine in a way that delivers economic benefits for Westport, the surrounding region and the New Zealand economy, while also resulting in a net gain to the conservation estate.

With guidance from the Department of Conservation, we will put significant effort into rehabilitation and protection of flora and fauna. We will set up a \$250,000 trust to fund regeneration of the mine area, protect species such as the brown spotted kiwi and support control of predators, pests and weeds.

We have also committed to supporting predator control of 5620 hectares of the neighbouring Heaphy River catchment area for the next 35 years. This work will help protect and monitor populations of the great spotted kiwi, South Island kaka and powelliphanta land snails.

Through this work and our rehabilitation of mine sites, we'll deliver environmental benefits that exceed impacts.

The hard coking coal that is mined from the Plateau is exported for use in the manufacture of carbon steel; an essential product in many everyday items including bridges, airplanes, buses and cars, water pipes, pots and pans and even wind turbines.

This coal can also be used for making carbon filters in dialysis machines and silicones for shampoos, toothpaste, lubricants and resins.

The coal from the Plateau is not thermal coal which is burnt in power stations.

We share a passion with Forest and Bird and all conservationists to protect New Zealand's conservation estate which covers some 8.7 million hectares, or 33 per cent of our country, compared with less than 0.1 per cent of land used for mining.

Bathurst firmly believes modern mining can benefit everyone – the Westport community, the world's population and the environment both now and for future generations.

We can become a wealthier nation and we can look after our environment by being smarter about how we use our resources for everyone's benefit, including the conservation estate.

Hamish Bohannan is the CEO of Bathurst Resources.

The Escarpment Mine Project is an open cast coal mine on a 200 hectare mining permit on the Denniston Plateau in the Buller District, which is expected to employ 225 people and produce a million tonnes of premium hard coking coal a year.