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MODERN MINER SHARES SUSTAINABILITY AIMS

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By Hamish Bohannan



A tramp in the bush, or a day at the beach involves more petro-chemicals and industrial processes than most conservationists care to mention.

A polypropylene skivvy, Gore-Tex jacket, tramping boots, nylon ropes, walking poles, and barbeques are made with petro-chemicals or coal.

Make no mistake, our modern way of life is founded on fossil fuels.

It's easy to forget that coal helped save Britain's forests from extinction 200 years ago, when coal replaced wood as the primary source for cooking and heating.

The steam engine and industrial revolution followed shortly after, boosting living standards for our modern society. Since then, our prosperity and way of life has been firmly based on access to cheap fossil fuels. While we are rapidly reducing this dependency, this is not yet the case for hundreds of millions of people in the developing world.

Bathurst Resources agrees with Royal Forest and Bird that our society needs a new direction, based on sustainability and efficiency. In the meantime, our current standards of living still depend on coal and coal-based energy is still part of the key to addressing global poverty.

On the Denniston Plateau, Bathurst is not proposing to redevelop coal mining to fuel global energy needs. Instead, we'll be recovering high-grade coking coal used to make steel and this will benefit New Zealand through new jobs and revenue for a traditional mining community that's in strong need of support.

Denniston Plateau is a coalfield that has been mined for over 100 years and is not a pristine environment, though it has some areas of unique environmental value.

Bathurst's application for the Escarpment Mine project is a first step in re-establishing the Plateau as a mining centre, generating jobs and revenue on the West Coast, and cleaning up some of the problems left when mining was abandoned there in the 1970s such as acid mine drainage.

Bathurst is not proposing to open cut the whole Plateau. Firstly, the coal is only in pockets. Secondly, where appropriate or needed, Bathurst will use other techniques such as underground mining as it is currently doing in re-opening the Coalbrookdale mine, not far from Escarpment.

Despite being part of Bathurst's exploration leases, recreational areas such as Mt Rochfort will never be touched because it is inconsistent with the company's values.

Bathurst will work with the community and Forest and Bird to protect high value bio-diversity areas, as well as funding rehabilitation projects and pest and weed control measures to achieve a net gain for the conservation estate.

Bathurst is a proud, modern New Zealand mining company with a 95 per cent New Zealand workforce.

Though Bathurst is internationally owned, all of its operations are in New Zealand and the bulk of its revenue will stay here. In addition, a sixth of the company's shareholders are based in New Zealand – despite being in a sector that is still recovering from tragedy.

Our operations on Denniston will provide more than 400 new jobs on the West Coast, about \$41 million in wages and \$60 million in royalties and taxes, each year.

Bathurst shares Forest and Bird's passion 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.

The world is in a transition stage towards a more sustainable future. In the meantime, we can be smarter about using our natural resources to benefit everyone, 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.



Bathurst Resources is a modern New Zealand coal mining company with operations on the West Coast and Southland.

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