

# Mining chief hits back

Peter Foley | 31st December 2011



Grandchester residents and Ebenezer Against Mining members Mary and Richard Davies are among those worried about impending coal mining activity in the region.

QUEENSLAND Resources Council boss Michael Roche has hit back at coalmining protesters, saying mining is good for Ipswich.

His comments come after legal action group Ebenezer Against Mining launched a Supreme Court bid to halt plans by Singapore-based OGL Resources Limited to reopen the Ebenezer mine near Rosewood next year.

Mr Roche said mining had played a significant part in Ipswich's history and gave its economy an important boost.

"People with only a recent acquaintance with the Ipswich region may be mistaken in the belief that mining is only part of the region's history," he said.

"In fact, latest data compiled by the QRC shows that in 2010-11, some 2600 people in the Ipswich local government area relied on the mining industry, directly and indirectly, for their jobs."

Mr Roche said opposition to the reopening of the Ebenezer mine ignored the fact it had only recently stopped operating.

"Ebenezer mine was in operation as recently as 2003 and sits adjacent to two operating mines and associated rail infrastructure," he said.

"Subject to continued commercial viability and compliance with the highest standards of environmental performance, there is no reason why mining cannot continue to provide an important injection into the Ipswich economy."

A spokeswoman for Ebenezer Against Mining denied the group was out of touch, saying miners were "behind the times".

"There is huge scope for mining in Queensland but what we have here is a beautiful semi-rural residential area, including a healthy koala corridor that should be preserved from industrial development for the sake of people who have invested in healthy near-city lifestyle," she said.

The spokeswoman said the group appreciated mining's contribution to the area, but Ipswich had moved on and it was time mining moved on too.

"Residents face uncertainty, the value of their homes falls and if mining is extended their lifestyle will be ruined," she said.

Meanwhile, Mining Minister Stirling Hinchliffe said he wanted to reassure Ipswich residents that a mining lease had not been granted for the much larger Bremer Valley Coal Project adjoining the Ebenezer site.

"I want to make it crystal clear for Ipswich residents that despite what they may have read or heard, there have been no approvals for large scale commercial mining on the area," Mr Hinchliffe said.