



Ensham revised mine plans hailed

By MELISSA MARTIN

LANDHOLDERS along the Nogoa River in the Central Highlands have welcomed a decision by Ensham Resources to revise its future mining methods and focus on underground mining operations rather than open cut – a move that will reduce the total area of open cut mining by 830 hectares.

In an effort to reduce the potential environmental impact of the Emerald mine, Ensham Resources last week submitted a comprehensive supplementary report to the State Government outlining a revised mining methodology for the Ensham Central Project.

At the end of 2007 Ensham finalised an environmental impact statement (EIS) process to develop the Ensham Central Project by expanding the mine's open cut operation as well as introducing underground mining techniques.

However, Ensham CEO Peter Westerhuis said a number of factors led senior management to review the development and make changes to the mining

this area by using underground mining techniques will avoid disturbance in the anabranch of the Nogoa River and avoids the need to construct an additional 12 kilometres of levee banks.

"A number of independent investigations, which form the content of the supplementary report, clearly demonstrate our revised mining methodologies, which incorporate the use of bord and pillar and long-wall underground mining methods, significantly reduces the environmental impact of our planned development."

Lobby group, FutureFood Queensland, which was set up earlier this year to lobby the State Government to institute a planning process to protect prime agricultural lands from any adverse impacts of mining, this week applauded Ensham's revised plans.

FutureFood Qld spokesman and Central Queensland farmer and grazier, Charlie Wilson, said the new plan would significantly reduce the impact on the environment and more importantly, "will not expose the surface to the ravages of open-cut mining".

"This is the first step towards what FutureFood Qld are calling for – Ensham are to be congratulated," Mr Wilson said.

However, Mr Wilson said he had some reservations about the state of the land after traditional underground mining operations and any possible subsidence from mining activities.

"We will now be looking to Ensham and the State Government to ensure the land is left in as good a state as when mining started," Mr Wilson said.

"The State should hold money in trust to enable remedial works to be carried out in the future if required."

FutureFood has also been talking to the Central Highlands Regional Council and the Minister for Natural Resources, Stephen Robertson, about a Linc Energy project north west of Emerald.

● **Ensham Resources' Supplementary Report is on public display for 20 business days at the Emerald office of the Department of Environment and Resources (DERM).**

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methodologies outlined in the 2007 EIS.

"In response to the impacts of market conditions, lessons we learnt from the flood event in 2008 and feedback from the community we made the decision to revise our mining methodology and transition the mine to a primarily underground operation," Mr Westerhuis said.

"The key change to the plan is our decision not to access the coal beneath the central floodplain north of the Nogoa River through open cut mining.

"The decision results in a reduction in the total area of open cut mining of 830 hectares compared to the original proposal. Accessing the coal resource in