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Coal mine tour broadens students' career outlook

STUDENTS from Emerald's Marist College visited the Ensham Coal mine near Comet recently as part of their senior school career development program.

Twenty-six students from Years 10, 11 and 12 took part in the tour, aimed to provide senior students with exposure to local industry to help them plan their future studies and career goals.

Ensham general manager, development, Peter Smith, told the visiting students the coal mining industry provided a wide range of career opportunities for machinery operators, tradespeople, mining engineers, environmentalists, accountants and geologists.

"Like any industry driven by supply and demand, the coal industry is cyclical and we are currently experiencing a strong period of growth resulting in significant demand for young people," he said.

"We are particularly looking for more mining engineers and good tradespeople."

Ensham Resources is Queensland's third largest thermal coal producer and is planning to expand its operations with a proposed future underground mine in addition to expansion of its open cut opera-

tions.

Ensham's technical services manager, Graham Morris, said feedback from universities indicated enrolments in mining engineering were increasing and a significant number of students now came from rural areas which were previously under-represented in mining engineering courses.

Many of these graduates returned to country areas to work.

This trend was an important factor in the continued sustainability of rural communities such as Emerald.

Marist College spokesperson, Bronwyn Finnen, said 60 Marist College students from Emerald were taking part in the school's Youth Enterprise Success (YES) industry involvement program to broaden their employability skills and to take part in extra vocational training.

This represented a major increase over previous years and was helping prepare the students for the new Queensland Certificate of Education due to be implemented in 2006.

These changes are part of the Education Training Reforms for the Future (ETRF) initiative which encourages part time apprenticeships, external training, work experience and community projects to make students 'job ready' prior to leaving school.



■ JOB TASTE TEST: Emerald's Marist College students visit Ensham Coal mine near Comet as part of their career development program.