
Protesters want to protect Felton from coal mine

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The News reported that dust and pollution from a proposed coalmine at Felton near Toowoomba could end up as far away as Maryborough, protesters warn.

The Friends of Felton group is fighting a proposal by Ambre Energy to turn prime farming land into a 12.8 million tonne per year open cut coalmine a petrochemical plant to convert the coal into liquid fuel and a power station. They fear the plan will turn their hamlet into a ghost town.

The group released balloons last weekend to see how far pollution from the proposed mine site could travel. Within 5 days, the balloons started showing up in Kingaroy and Maryborough more than 300 kilometers away.

Mr Rob McCready spokesman of Friends of Felton said that the balloons showed that if the mine went ahead it would not just be Felton's problem. He said that "If it goes ahead there will be no stopping them."

Local grain grower Mr Craig Hanlon said that his family had been farming in the area for 130 years and had planned to continue for at least another 130. He said that if the mine went ahead, it would be right beside their property. With the dust and pollution expected to be generated. He was positive it would destroy his property and its farming potential.

He added that "This is very close to becoming reality. They reckon they will be able to start digging in the middle of next year. It's ridiculous to be risking this land for the sake of a coalmine that's only going to be here for about 30 years. They want to get in, destroy the land and walk away."

Mr Hanlon said that he and many others doubted it could ever be returned to the condition it is in now. He said that the area would become a ghost town like nearby Acland, which had been all but wiped from the map by an open cut mine there.

(Sourced from The News)

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