

# Mega mine expansions

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investment in the Bowen Basin community."

She said the Eaglefield and Millennium expansions could require 200 new staff per mine.

But according to the miner's website, Eaglefield could employ more than double that, although final numbers would not be clear until assessments were finished.

Eaglefield, especially, would need additional workers because, she said, it would take up to nine weeks to strip overburden.

The expansions would largely rely on the infrastructure already there, although Eaglefield will have the benefit of some new infrastructure, including a second planned facility to rail coal to Abbot Point Coal Terminal, north of Bowen.

The Peabody spokesperson did not identify exactly how much the American mining giant would pour into the region with these expansions, except to say that it would be "significant".

"Peabody made these commitments before the onset of the global financial crisis," she said.

"And Peabody is committed to investing in Australia for it to be in the best possible position when the markets turn around."

The spokesperson said the projects were not just about the sustainability of the coal industry but also for the communities in the mining areas, west of Mackay.

"We would look at getting these

projects done as quickly as possible," she said.

"And we want the smoothest transition possible through this process."

Peabody is not the only company making sizeable investments in this region when other areas have been hit much harder by the world economic situation.

Jellinbah Resources, a much smaller mining company compared to the American goliath, has completed its Lake Vermont project north-east of Dysart.

The new mine has been built and

**Peabody is committed to investing in Australia for it to be in the best possible position when the markets turn around**

will be operated under contract to Thiess. It is understood to have begun production in February.

The \$264 million project will produce up to four million tonnes of coal a year.

About 280 people are employed at the new venture.

Lake Vermont will sell its coal to steel producers in Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Brazil and Europe.

The management of Jellinbah Coal did not return calls when contacted by the Daily Mercury.



Sunfish Mackay branch president Lance Murray, on the old Hospital Bridge yesterday, fully supports plans for a four-span fishing platform.

PHOTO: AMANDA BALMER 010609/146

# Ditch bridge if state won't pay

By CAIT BESTER  
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SUNFISH Mackay branch president Lance Murray has come out in support of plans to demolish most of the old Hospital Bridge and leave four spans for a fishing platform.

The State Government's Main Roads department will turn over four remaining spans to Mackay Regional Council.

"As a ratepayer, I think that to maintain the hospital bridge in its entirety is a liability to the community," Mr Murray said.

"The bridge was to be removed in its entirety.

"We (Sunfish) received advice that the entire bridge would be pulled down so Main Roads, council and Sunfish had on-site meetings to see if we could utilise part of that bridge.

"When this (the current plan) is finished, it will be an absolutely fantastic land-based recreational fishing opportunity. I believe it's incumbent on

council to invest ratepayers' money wisely."

Mr Murray said if it was going to cost \$100,000 a year to maintain the whole bridge it would be better spent on repairing potholes around town.

"All of the fish are in the shallow water anyway and

**It's incumbent on council to invest ratepayers' money wisely.**

- Lance Murray

there are plans to beautify the north side of the bridge.

"During the week there are about five people at a time on the bridge. You don't need a whole bridge for five people.

"Everyone is entitled to their views but who is going to pay for it? If it was funded by the State Government I would support it but I can't as a rate-

payer," he said.

Since the closure of the old Hospital Bridge to traffic, the Mackay community has been campaigning for the old crossing to be kept intact to enable pedestrians and cyclists to cross the river and so fishermen will have sufficient space at what has become Mackay's new fishing hotspot.

Mackay's Dr Bill Boyd - at the forefront of the Save Our Bridge campaign - said he didn't want ratepayers to be hit but for the State Government to take responsibility for the bridge.

"The State Government and council should work out a way to keep the bridge intact.

"The bottom line is the State Government owns the bridge and in comparison to what they spend down south on footbridges the cost of maintaining the old Hospital Bridge would be a small amount," he said.

Dr Boyd asked those with petitions to return them to the Daily Mercury when signed.

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