

FutureFood Qld Newsletter 1 - 3 March 2009

Welcome to our first newsletter for FutureFood Qld. For some of you, this may be the first you have heard of FutureFood Qld, so we will provide a little background...

FutureFood Qld had its official launch at the Rural Press Club luncheon in Brisbane on Friday 13th February 2009. The event was fully booked which gave a strong indication of the interest in the issues we are raising. The event was successful with many supportive comments and questions coming from the floor following the presentation. The launch was attended by major farm lobby groups including Agforce and QFF, mining representatives, and legal and professional firms.

FutureFood Qld's mission is "to protect the world renowned, clean and green, premium food production capacity (iconic farmland) of Queensland from inappropriate mining developments". We are targeting the problem at its source- at the state development planning level. There is no overall development plan guiding the growth of the resources sector in regional Queensland. Development is happening on a completely uncoordinated, haphazard basis.

There are over 40 new major energy development proposals in the Dalby Regional Council area alone. If these proposals go ahead, that area will become one of the most intense energy precincts in the world. Central Queensland already has over 35 operating mines, with many more proposed, all without any overarching development plan. There is no-one within Government with a clear picture of what all this development should look like. This lack of overall planning and total lack of vision, is causing the state government to make incredibly bad decisions like issuing Mining Development Licences on areas such as Haystack Road.

FutureFood Qld aims to force the Queensland government to give regional Queensland the development planning it desperately needs. The Surat Basin could ultimately become a model of planned development, showcasing to the world that clean green food production, and energy production can co- exist in the same region. The Bowen Basin desperately needs an assessment of its overall development impact, and new projects need to be considered in the light of their contribution to cumulative impact, not on a stand alone basis.

The same day we launched FutureFood Qld in Brisbane, our website came online. If you haven't already visited futurefoodqld.com.au, we strongly recommend you do so. We are proud of this site. It gives a clear explanation of the reasons why protecting prime farm land is so vital. Please sign on as a supporter if you haven't already. Becoming a supporter of FutureFood Qld is free, but we also need significant financial support. In the last week we have posted out over 300 letters to regional businesses requesting moral and financial support. We are already very encouraged by the response. Raising this issue has certainly struck a chord with many Queenslanders. Our Brisbane campaign started in earnest this week and will include significant peak hour radio coverage, billboards, print and TV media. This is not at all cheap to undertake, we need all the financial support we can muster. Some farmers and businesses have already been generous, with many individual donations of \$10,000.

We are very focussed on direct lobbying and negotiation with Government and opposition parties. We intend also to work with the peak farm lobby groups, Agforce and QFF to maximise overall effort. In the two weeks since our launch, we have had meetings with the Qld Government, the LNP and the Greens. We think it is fair to say in all instances the discussions have been productive. Last Tuesday 24th February, representatives from FutureFood Qld attended a meeting between Haystack Rd Coal Committee and senior representatives of the Department of Infrastructure and Planning, and Department of Mines and Energy. With the government in caretaker mode, bureaucrats have to be very careful what they say, but we think it is fair to say there is clear recognition within the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, and to a degree even within Department of Mines and Energy, of the need to address this planning vacuum. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for the Premier, who steadfastly maintains a disinterest in the impacts on the food security of

Queensland's children, resulting from the decisions her government is making. Globally institutions from the United Nations and The World Bank to the Bill Gates foundation recognise that food security is going to become a mayor crisis within just 30 years. Even our Prime Minister and Federal Agriculture Minister recognise the seriousness of food security. Against this setting, it is impossible to understand how the Queensland Government would issue mining licences on prime farming land when we have such vast reserves in areas much less productive and in need of economic stimulus.

Last week we met with LNP leaders, both elected representatives and party officials. We are encouraged by LNP's response to the issues we raise, but whilst we have a commitment in principal to protecting areas of iconic farmland from LNP, we are yet to see meaningful policy or even any public announcement of support from LNP. The Queensland Greens have shown genuine interest in protecting iconic farmland, and we don't doubt that should they find themselves in a position of influence after the election, will be supportive in our efforts to get common sense to prevail in government. It will be truly interesting to see the impact of independents in this election. Their presence in several key seats throughout Queensland could see labour loose power, or see LNP fail to gain power.

FutureFood Qld will encourage voters to support those who protect our food bowls for our children and future grandchildren. FutureFood Qld will work with the elected government, whoever that might be. Our strategy is to engage all players and inform them of the mistakes being made, and the remedies required. Our public awareness campaign is designed to empower people in the streets of marginal seats, wherever they may be, to question "would-be MP's" on their commitment to Queensland's food security, and the need to protect our prime farm land.

To those already supporting FutureFood Qld, thankyou! To those hearing of us for the first time, please support us by joining our free membership online, and favour us with your financial support where possible.

The time for action is now!

Regards,

Geoff Hewitt and Charlie Wilson.

Co- Chairman,

FutureFood Qld.