

Port Lincoln
Times (1)

The sky just may not be falling in as is predicted

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Mining vs farming

Remember that childhood story book character Chicken Licken, the paranoid little chook that ran around screaming that the world was ending and "the sky is falling" to anyone that would listen?

Well it appears he's back!

Recent issues of the Times seem to have letters, almost as if on a roster, predicting doom and gloom if mining starts on the Eyre Peninsula and that mining and agriculture cannot co-exist here.

This is absolute rubbish!

There are certainly some short memories about. Those of us that worked at Olympic Dam in the early 1990s can well remember all the lads that came off farms all over the Eyre Peninsula to earn much needed income to keep their farms afloat during the severe rural recession of the time.

Coming at a vital time, the project saved many of our EP farmers from going under and even to this day, many Eyre Peninsula people rely on income from mining to enable them to live here.

Not every kid leaving our schools has the opportunity to step onto the family farm or into a family business, yet the majority of them want employment that enables them to stay here - and why not? There's no better place to live as far as I'm concerned.

Years ago, during that drought, interest rate and grain price induced rural recession; bumper stickers did not negatively say "Lock the Gate", they made a simple point, "No Farmers - No Food".

At the time, those of us working up at Roxby also proudly displayed our stickers saying "What's Yours is Mined".

Both statements of course, could not have been truer for the time, and still are.

Indeed without miners producing raw materials for steel for tractors and harvesters and also the oils and fuels for them, as well as vital chemicals and fertilisers, and even electricity, farmers could not produce our food and we would still starve.

They too, are a primary industry and neither industry is more important than the other and both rely on each other.

The times when we could get all the mined raw materials we need out in deserts, out of sight and out of mind, have long passed.

It's not a matter now of IF mining and agriculture can co-exist; it's a matter of HOW we do it.

That means conversation, consultation, consensus and then cooperation between the two industries in group forums.

This could save some small country schools, hospitals and even hotels from closing due to population shrinkage.

Our children deserve no less than a chance at local employment and staying here.

We should ignore radical little splinter groups and individuals, branching off and using spin, scare tactics and unnecessary fear-mongering like that story book chicken.

They would deny employment opportunities to our school leavers while enjoying a cosseted life themselves.

There has always been an obvious course of action for the C.A.V.E people (Campaigners Against Virtually Everything). The best way you can show your complete disregard for what is a vital industry, is to not support it by purchasing any product, that originates from mining projects.

You know; simple things like homes, electricity, cars, fuel, food, even plastics.

Good luck with that, and I'll come visit you in the cave for dinner some time.

I like my dinosaur medium rare thank you, and if we have a drink, mine will be the one always seen as half full, not half empty.

ERIC KOTZ

Tumby Bay