

Media release

13 December 2013

Vanishing Acland ignored by miners in Darling Downs

The economic benefits of a major Queensland coal project in the Darling Downs were exaggerated and the negative impacts underplayed, according to an analysis by The Australia Institute.

There are currently 28 proposed mining projects in Queensland and the state government has committed to doubling coal production and exports by 2030.

One of the projects under consideration is an expansion of the New Acland Project near the town of Oakey.

“The town of Acland has almost been wiped off the map with just one resident remaining. This is a frightening example of what can happen to a region if the impacts of mining aren’t properly weighed against economic and community well-being,” The Australia Institute Economist Rod Campbell said.

“If what we’ve seen in Acland is repeated countless times across the state, imagine the condition our regional communities and the economy would be in.”

The new report *Biting the land that feeds you* identifies three techniques used by the New Hope Group to make the New Acland project appear more beneficial: ignoring negative local impacts, emphasising ‘indirect’ job creation and avoiding cost benefit analysis.

“The operators of the New Acland coal mine continue to claim their project “boosts” the economy. But in reality a town has disappeared, agricultural businesses are closing and local people are getting sick,” Mr Campbell said.

The Australia Institute report finds that instead of standard assessment, the proponents used economic models that have been described as “biased” and “abused” by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the Productivity Commission respectively.

“The assessment of the New Acland project follows a well worn pattern in coal project evaluation – ignore local impacts, emphasise the results of flawed models and avoid thorough cost benefit analysis,” Campbell said.

For media enquiries, please contact:

Caelin Worthington 0421 552 664