

**PLUMBING SERVICE**

24-HOUR SERVICE

Phone

**Ian Harrison**

on

**43-7434**

Lic. No. 226

# The Valley Advocate

**Jeremy Francis  
CHEM-MART  
CHEMIST**

EAR PIERCING

ONLY \$6

including studs

20% Off Gift Voucher  
presented with each ear  
piercing

Registered by Australia Post — Publication No. NAC 1225 —

WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 1983

— Phone 451155 — ★ 25¢

## Is Drayton breakthrough close?

Mounting pressure from within the unions could result in Drayton Mine being manned by the end of the week, it was claimed last night.

A series of mass meetings in the Upper Hunter this week is likely to see the great majority of open cut workers wanting the bans on Drayton lifted.

These meetings have been precipitated by last week's formation of an open cut steering committee.

A spokesman for the committee last night claimed that support for the move had been tremendous and went on: "Something will happen by the end of this week."

"Drayton could be manned by one way or the other by the end of this week."

If that happens, it remains to be seen whether it resolves the issue or merely escalates it into a national crisis.

Maritime unions have already threatened to stop any export coal from going through the Port of Newcastle if Drayton is manned against official union wishes.

In the event of that, the spokesman said: "We would look to the Government and the ACTU to step in if the Port stopped because that would ruin the industry."

The steering committee, formed only last Wednesday at Muswellbrook, has called an aggregate meeting of all open cut workers

And despite rumours that the meeting was off, the committee spokesman told the Argus: "It's definitely on."

Those rumours began following a meeting between representatives of the new committee and the Combined Mining Unions' Northern Liaison Committee last Thursday.

The Northern Liaison Committee agreed to the holding of a series of aggregate meetings by individual

open cut unions and initially the steering committee accepted this.

Then the steering committee changed their mind, preferring instead to have one big meeting of all the open cut unions, as originally planned.

It is expected that the meeting will endorse the formation of an Open Cut Liaison Committee.

Some district officials are likely to attend and a committee spokesman said that the Mines Mechanics Association had promised to take no retaliatory action against their members if they attended on Tuesday.

But the spokesman claimed there had been a threat to Saxonvale Mine members of the Miners Federation that they would be "out of a job" if they attended.

In addition to the meeting, however, open cut unions are going ahead with aggregate meetings of their own union members this week.

The AMWSU will hold theirs after Tuesday's Showground meeting. The Miners Federation meeting is set down for Wednesday between shifts at Ravensworth, and the Mines Mechanics Association have called a 24 hour stoppage on Thursday for their members to attend an aggregate meeting.

At the root of the problem, as far as the steering committee is concerned, is the fact that open cut workers are outnumbered more than 3-1 in the Northern district.

Although, following Thursday's meeting open cut workers have a stronger voice on the Northern Liaison Committee, they feel that voting would still go against them by a large majority at any Northern district aggregate meeting.

The committee claim that there are 8,537 underground workers in the north and 2,604 in the open cuts.



• Mr Mike Davies, a Singleton mineworker, speaks at Muswellbrook.

## Upper Hunter's own Shergar mystery

The wraps are off one of the best kept secrets in racing circles in the Upper Hunter — the mysterious disappearance of a \$1500 bronze statue of a horse and jockey.

It was to be the prize in an art union organised to raise funds towards the \$70,000 plus cost of Scone's now famous Mare and Foal statue.

The initial casting of the horse and rider was donated by sculptor Gabriel Sterk. However, the Mare and Foal Committee has since had to draw down funds by \$1500 for a replacement.

The art union is to be decided on Scone Cup Day and there are hopes that enough tickets will be sold during Horse Week to make up the lost funds.

The original marquette was last seen in December at Scone Racecourse during the two-day St Andrews Day meeting. It was locked in the club room with the proceeds of ticket sales overnight on Friday and the statue was gone next morning. Ironically, the money was intact.

Police asked the few people who knew of the loss to keep the matter under wraps as this was vital to the investigation.

Five months later, the disappearance remains a mystery and police are no closer to tracking down the thief.

To keep faith with the community, the committee released the story this week along with the news that the art union can now be finalised.

The organisers' full statement appears on Page 6.

## Horse Week feature P11

## How Minister sees Drayton

The NSW Government is committed to the opening of Drayton Mine, Mineral Resources Minister, Mr Stewart, said in Singleton on Friday at the end of a three day visit to the Hunter Valley.

He rejected the criticism that the Government has been sitting on the fence over union bans at Dayton and said he would be holding urgent discussions with the Premier, Mr Wran.

Mr Stewart also made a "cool it" plea to the unions over Drayton and various other troubles currently threatening the NSW mining industry.

But Government intervention seems unlikely because he insisted that the Drayton dispute had to be resolved by the mine company and the unions involved.

The Minister visited various mine projects in Newcastle and the Valley during his three days and he spoke to the Argus at the end of his final visit — to Mt Thorley mine.

The three days provided him with his first experience of open cut mining prior to an overseas trip to Japan and Korea, but he had been keeping a close watch on the growing Drayton crisis during the visit.

"I regard this week's events as a most serious turn in industrial relations in the Hunter Valley," Mr Stewart said.

### Confrontation

"I will be reporting urgently to the Premier and Mr Hills, the Industrial

Relations Minister, this evening in order to ascertain if there is some action the Government should take in the matter."

He made his "cool it" plea over threats by the maritime unions to ban coal exports through Newcastle.

They have made this threat because of three issues — Drayton, R. W. Miller's retrenchment plans at Gunnedah and threats to union overtime bans.

They say that they will not handle any coal if Drayton is mined without union consent.

## Inside your more news newspaper

### News

More than 1000 mine workers gathered in Muswellbrook last Wednesday, to declare their support to form an open cut liaison committee. With news of the crucial meeting, turn to page 4.

Member for the Upper Hunter, Mr Colin Fisher in speaking to the public at the Drayton Mine meeting, claimed that any increases in production of coal at the Drayton open cut, would not materially effect employment in NSW underground mines. More on page 5.

In the monthly report from the Department of Agriculture, the Livestock Officer reports that the recent rains have considerably boosted pasture growth. — page 3.

### ENTERTAINMENT

Read your Stars — Improve your Golf Swing — Get some Tennis Hints — and look at the brighter side of life through the Advocate Comics

Also test your skill with our Crossword and check the latest Lotto Results. — Page 8

For the week's television programs and all you need to know about clubs, radio and cinemas — page 10 of the Valley Advocate Entertainment guide.

### Sport

Turn to sport on page 36 for the weekend Rugby League results and a preview of this week's round of competition.

Also softball is gearing up for the start of the winter '83 competition.

For more news on rugby union, cricket, bowls, soccer, squash and much more, turn to Valley Advocate Sport.

Today's Valley Advocate features a special preview to Scone Horse Week, an annual carnival of races and sales. For full details, turn to page 11.