

Mister Chair, Panel

Welcome to Gunnedah.

I am here to support our district's coal and extraction industries and in particular, the Vickery expansion project

My name is Don Ewing

I have lived all my life in Gunnedah, as did my father, my grandfather, and my great grandfather. My great grandfather came to Gunnedah as the first Sargent of Police in 1884, only seven years after the discovery of coal in our district.

Our family has been in the stock and station, auctioneering, and real estate business since 1894 and can boast having four generations of knowledge and history in business in this wonderful community which has been kind to us.

There would be few residents more qualified than us in Gunnedah that have been fortunate to have had stories passed on to us from the early years of Gunnedah's development.

We have experienced the highs and lows of the community more than most.

- the 1890-1900 drought,
- the incredible toll on our residents from WWI
- The great depression of the '30s
- Drought in 1946,
- WWII plus other conflicts like Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.
- the drought over the past 2-3 years

We are by and large a rural community and always will be, as it is one of our greatest strengths. Fortunately, we also have another strength with mining co-existing with agriculture since 1877 (140 years).

All through the hard times, many in the community were able to enjoy the income from mining activities and much of the district relied on the locally produced energy to heat our homes.

Today, mining activity generates enormous local employment opportunities within our town and provides sources of additional income to both local and district businesses.

If you have travelled around Australia, as I have been fortunate to do so, you will witness what mining has achieved for those communities that are located near mineral reserves, and those that have not.

Gunnedah has been the beneficiary of increased local mining activity since 2005 and has generated over 1500 onsite mining jobs, with many, many more subsidiary

industries establishing businesses within the surrounding communities. This has meant even more local employment opportunities.

Millions of dollars have have been invested into Gunnedah since 2005 by the mining companies, more than any government of either persuasion has done in a century.

Mister / Madam Chair/panel, you only have to drive around Gunnedah while you are here to witness first hand this wonderful, vibrant country town and what it has to offer.

“That is, if you can find a parking space”

Before 2005, we had 37 empty shops , most in the main street and little industry.

LOOK AT US NOW/

Boasting three major supermarkets, a fantastic hospital that has hundreds and thousands of dollars, injected into it by the mining companies, a rural health medical centre, aged care facilities that are the envy of any regional centre in NSW. There are 6 early childhood centres, 4 primary schools and soon to be 3 high schools.

Our sporting and recreation facilities are second to none, there are new homes being built and older ones being renovated, an expanding population, and a CBD that has all the choices of cafes and restaurants , retail business's, theatres, museums, clubs and hotels you would expect in a town twice our size.

The expansion of the coal industry has increased our population from 9000 residents to 12000 which brings a vibrancy that is attracting younger generations to start and grow their families here.

Gunnedah is alive. Why? Because mining is providing our town and everyone it, the opportunity to ensure this town continues to have a future.