



WHY I WANT A PAY CUT

COUNCIL VOTES, PAGE 3



MOMENT MY LIFE CHANGED

TUMOUR BATTLE, PAGE 7

NEWCASTLE

HERALD

FRIDAY
June 5, 2015

VOICE OF THE HUNTER

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Hitting a high note

MORE than 450 Hunter students revelled in the spotlight at the Civic Theatre on Thursday.

Representing 11 Catholic high schools from across the Maitland-Newcastle diocese, the pupils presented the eighth annual DioSounds music festival.

They staged a matinee for more than 1000 appreciative primary students, ahead of the evening performance.

A choir from Saint Catherine's Singleton is seen here singing the Michael Jackson hit *Man in the Mirror*.

Picture: Darren Pateman
Gallery: Pages 24-25



Workers take a dig at company over jobs security

MINING RUNNERS

By JOANNE MCCARTHY

DRAYTON mine workers and supporters have turned on the company in a series of explosive Facebook posts that undermine the coal industry's "Voice for Mining" jobs campaign at a critical period.

Drayton is accused of leading workers and supporters "down the garden path, all the way to bulls-ville" in a May 30 post on the "I Support the Drayton South Project" Facebook page, following a meeting last week between workers and mine executives.

"It is with great disgust and sadness that I post this. But I believe it needs to be told," wrote Lachlan Burnie, who alleged workers were advised jobs were not assured if Drayton South mine was approved, despite job security being the centrepiece of a mining industry campaign backing the project.

The Facebook page alleged workers were told they were overpaid relative to mine production, that contractors could do the work "cheaper", and "not every body would be going over to Drayton South".

This contradicts mine owner Anglo American's campaign, backed by the NSW Minerals Council, that expanding Drayton mine to Drayton South would "save 500 local jobs".

Securing Drayton jobs featured prominently during Premier Mike Baird's visit to the Upper Hunter after the NSW election, and Drayton workers filled a Denman hall to make statements during a Planning Assessment Commission hearing in 2014.

On the "I Support the Drayton South Project" Facebook page on May 30, workers and

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Poles, wires privatised

We must move on, says Foley



NSW Labor leader Luke Foley says his party has lost the battle to keep the state's poles and wires in public hands and it's time to move on.

Premier Mike Baird and Treasurer Gladys Berejiklian watched on from the public gallery as their electricity network privatisation bills scraped through the Parliament's upper house in a late-night sitting on Wednesday, having secured the support of balance-of-power MP Fred Nile.

Although Labor fought the laws to the last, voting against them alongside the Greens and Shooters and Fishers MPs, Mr Foley on Thursday said it was time for the party to move on.

"There are many other issues in state politics, and under my leadership the party will not have an obsessive focus on this one

issue," Mr Foley said in front of Parliament. "We won't be fighting the last war."

Mr Baird had spent the morning talking up the prospect that 99-year leases for Transgrid, Ausgrid and Endeavour Energy would fund.

He confirmed plans for a 66-kilometre high-capacity

rail line that will include a rail tunnel under Sydney Harbour.

Sydney Rapid Transit, renamed Sydney Metro, will run from Rouse Hill in the city's north-west, past Chatswood and North Sydney, under the harbour to Sydenham and west to Bankstown.

Together with upgrades

to the Western Line, it will deliver a 60 per cent capacity increase across the rail network, Transport Minister Andrew Constance said on Thursday.

But Mr Foley says he wants to "wait and see" whether the Premier can raise the \$20 billion he is counting on.

"The electricity privatisa-

tion debate is over - the debates now in state politics are about delivery, and we'll be holding Mr Baird's government to account on the delivery of his very grand promises," Mr Foley said.

Power grid for lease
Heralds' View
Page 10

Workers take aim at company over jobs

Bengalla plan approved

From Page 1

supporters questioned their loyalty to the mine.

"I will be withdrawing my support. I hope Anglo do right by their workforce, but it isn't looking good," the post by Lachlan Burnie concluded.

While "Lachlan Burnie" is not the name of a Drayton employee or a contract worker, and is believed to be a pseudonym of a Drayton worker, the *Newcastle Herald* has confirmed the Facebook post is consistent with the recollections of workers at the meeting.

In subsequent posts on the Facebook page, Drayton workers, contractors and supporters spoke with anger and disappointment about job threats, despite workers strongly backing Anglo American through the protracted Drayton South campaign.

"Being hoodwinked is an insult to all the sincere and committed

teams, both production and maintenance," said one post.

The more than 30 posts included references to current enterprise bargaining talks between the mine and workers, and concerns that Anglo American, along with other mine operators, was seeking to drive down permanent employee wages by increasing the use of contract workers.

Anglo American reacted strongly in December to suggestions its scaled-back Drayton South proposal, minus the Redbank pit closest to Darley and Coolmore thoroughbred horse breeders, would not be economically viable based on its own previous submissions to NSW Government regulators.

It rejected suggestions the third Drayton South bid, lodged late last year within weeks of the Planning Assessment Commission refusing an earlier application, was linked to deferring costly rehabilitation

work at Drayton. Muswellbrook mayor Martin Rush said economic modelling for Drayton South was based on market assumptions that were no longer true, particularly the price of coal, but "from council's perspective if the mine is to proceed it is imperative that Anglo American make good on its commitment to retain its workforce".

An Anglo American spokeswoman denied saying contractors would do a greater percentage of work at Drayton South, and "strongly rejects any suggestion that we have used our workforce in any negative way".

"Our focus remains on gaining approval for Drayton South to end the uncertainty for our workforce."

The NSW Minerals Council declined to comment.

Have your say in our poll
theherald.com.au

THE Commonwealth Department of Environment has approved Coal and Allied's plans to expand its Bengalla coal mine, west of Muswellbrook.

The NSW Planning Assessment Commission recommended the project for approval in February.

The project will result in an additional 15 million tonnes of coal a year for 24 years, the commission said. It will pay state tax royalties of \$778 million, federal royalties of \$509 million and create up to 900 jobs.

In granting approval, federal environment officials acknowledged that hundreds of hectares of a critically endangered woodland will be destroyed as a result of the expansion.

Coal and Allied has been ordered to prepare a biodiversity offset management plan to compensate for the clearing. A vegetation clearance protocol must also be developed, along with a landscape management plan. Several threatened species will lose 270 hectares of habitat, including the Grey Headed Flying Fox and Regent Honeyeater.

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