

## IN BRIEF

**Break and enter**

POLICE are investigating a break-and-enter at a Loam St address where a laptop computer was stolen. Police received reports of the offence at 9am Monday. It is alleged offenders gained entry via a rear door. Investigations are continuing.

**Drug raids**

POLICE executed a number of search warrants in Dalby on Tuesday and Wednesday. A number of drug utensils and drugs were seized. Anyone with information about drug related crime is urged to phone Crime Stoppers anonymously on 1800 333 000.

**Vehicle impounded**

A TARA man caught driving unlicensed after failing to appear in court has had his vehicle impounded. Police arrested the man on a warrant for failing to appear in court on Tuesday for driving charges. Shortly after he was released from custody police caught the man driving. His vehicle was impounded for 90 days.

**Caught again**

A DALBY man caught misbehaving on the road has had his number plates impounded. Police caught the 19-year-old man driving at 100kmh in a 50kmh zone on Tuesday. He was issued with an infringement notice and his licence was suspended. Police detected the same offender driving unlicensed on Drayton St on Wednesday. His number plates were impounded for seven days and he will appear in court at a later date.

**Several offences**

POLICE have conducted 40 random breath tests since Monday and have issued 16 infringement notices for numerous traffic offences.



**HARBOURING CONCERNS:** Macalister farmer David Hamilton is disappointed in the government's decision to pass the Mining Bill.

PHOTO: MELISSA MOBBS

# How close will mines be?

## Farmer fears Mining Bill will allow mining infrastructure at back door

By MELISSA MOBBS

DAVID Hamilton has lived on his Macalister farm for 25 years and said he "certainly wouldn't want a gas well near it".

Mr Hamilton is outraged at the government's decision this week to allow "low impact mines" to be built near properties in rural Queensland without notifying landholders or community groups.

"I'm not opposed to mining or coal seam gas, but there is a place for it, and that place is not right at the back door of our homes," he said.

The Mining Bill would

still see coal and large-scale mines following the current notification process, but Mr Hamilton said it wasn't good enough.

"There should be public notification and objection rights available to anyone who has a legitimate concern about proposed mining activity. It is not adequate that we are only able to have a say in the conditions of some mines," he said.

Natural Resources Minister Andrew Cripps told Parliament the majority of mining leases issued in Queensland carried low environmental risk.

He said small mines must

also cause less than 10ha of significant disturbance at a time, have no more than 20 employees and be removed from environmentally sensitive areas.

"Not one community or green group made an objection to these small mines," he said.

Mr Hamilton said there still needed to be clarity around the location of mining infrastructure.

"Distances from residences have not been clarified in the bill, so this will be left up to regulation. We are hearing that this is likely to be prescribed as 200m," he said.

"I'm sure Minister for

Natural Resources and Mines Andrew Cripps would not want his family to have to live only 200m from mining infrastructure, why should other rural Queenslanders have to do so?"

The bill came up against fierce opposition when it went through the parliamentary committee process.

Shine Lawyers, which has helped negotiate hundreds of land-access arrangements in the past six years, and industry group Cotton Australia feared landholders would be worse off when it came to their rights, suggesting

public objection rights for 90% of proposed mines would be lost.

Opposition environment spokeswoman Jackie Trad, objecting to the bill, said landholders no longer able to object would include an agricultural producer with a creek running through their operation that has impacts from an upstream mine.

"In essence, this bill seeks to pervert land use management arrangements in our state by stacking the process in favour of big miners and the resources industry at the expense of landholders, rural communities and all Queenslanders," she said.

# Laws strip rural rights

By MELISSA MOBBS

LANDHOLDERS have been hit hard after the Queensland Government passed a law that will take away their rights to object to resource developments.

The Mineral and Energy Resources Bill, which passed in Parliament on Tuesday night, would see proposed "low-impact mines" no longer having to notify the public about environmental authority applications.

Macalister farmer and chair of the Basin Sustainability Alliance David Hamilton is one of

many landholders across the region feeling abandoned by his government.

"It's disgraceful behaviour from a government that seems intent on placing the interests of mining companies in front of the rights of Queenslanders," Mr Hamilton said.

"Whether it's low impact or not, just the principle of being able to put in an objection and have the opportunity to receive compensation is a basic democratic right."

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