

Mining history recounted by long-time mining engineer

Retired mining engineer turned author Don Henderson has captured a fascinating account of the growth of Queensland's mining industry over the past 30 years in his new book, *Constant Change – the Curragh Coal Mine Story*.

Mr Henderson first started in the mining industry as a mining engineer on Bougainville Island in 1971. He went on to join the Curragh Mine development team in 1981 and retired as Wesfarmers Resources' Senior Development Manager almost 30 years later.

In the year since his retirement, Mr Henderson has immersed himself in research, interviewed more than 120 people and reviewed hundreds of historical documents to record a detailed and intimate history of the Curragh mine and its development in Central Queensland's Bowen Basin.

Constant Change, Mr Henderson's first book, was launched by Wesfarmers Managing Director, Richard Goyder in Brisbane on 3 May and in Blackwater on 4 May. It focuses on the story of the Curragh Mine and its people following its establishment in 1981.

Mr Henderson was involved in the development plans for Curragh, from purchasing initial mining equipment, recruiting staff and developing the operating and management philosophy for the mine.

"Curragh was a major part of my life for 30 years – along with many others, I have witnessed constant change in the mine and industry from external pressures and those driven internally by the mine's expansion," he said.

"Coal mining experiences extreme highs and lows in a relatively short space of time – ten years ago there was no money in coal and the industry was described as 'profitless prosperity'.

"Then of course there are the boom times, and I remember working on significant mine expansions such as the addition of Curragh North and Curragh East, which increased exports from three or four million tonnes to seven million tonnes and extended the life of the mine by another ten years."

Wesfarmers Resources sponsored Mr Henderson in his development of *Constant Change*, copies of which will be gifted to the State and regional libraries.

Managing Director Wesfarmers Resources, Stewart Butel, said Wesfarmers Resources was honoured to support the book's publication.

"I would like to acknowledge and thank Don for researching and writing this remarkable history of the Curragh mine. Don has left many legacies at Curragh, and this book adds to his impressive contribution," Mr Butel said.

Curragh Mine is operated by Wesfarmers Curragh Pty Ltd and covers an area of approximately 12,600 hectares in the coal-rich Bowen Basin on Central Queensland – 14 kilometres north-west of Blackwater and approximately 200 kilometres west of Rockhampton.

One of Australia's largest independent coal producers, Curragh currently produces 6.5 million tonnes of export coal and 2.5 million tonnes of domestic coal per year.

ENDS.

Interview opportunities available:

- *Constant Change* author Mr Don Henderson

For more information contact:

Don Henderson
Author, *Constant Change*
Mobile: 0419709918

Kent Beasley
Manager Corporate Affairs and Sustainability
Wesfarmers Resources
Ph: 30317731
Mobile: 0427574838
Email: kbeasley@wesresources.com.au