

## Murrurundi needs Bickham Coal Mine

I HAVE been in business for eight years in Murrurundi, as well as having worked for the Bickham and Bloomfield groups for several years.

My wife and I were raised in the local area with her grandfather being the Murrurundi mayor for several years.

Murrurundi is a great place for raising our two young children and also a great place for retirees as it is laid back and relatively safe.

However, I fear for its prosperity having seen in the past eight years many businesses open then close with more recently the closing of the town's only permanent doctor which is a big loss for the town.

I feel the key to reverse the decline is through diversification.

The more a country town can

diversify the more chance it had of surviving the economic swings of today. One thing Murrurundi lacks is heavy industry to support it.

Murrurundi currently has a perfect opportunity to diversify into heavy industry with the proposed Bickham coal project in the pipeline which would present enormous opportunities for Murrurundi and surrounding areas.

It would provide much needed employment, encouraging young families to settle in town which would then create a ripple effect by boosting local businesses and schools which then in turn encourage skilled services back in town such as your doctor and dentists which would in turn make it more appealing for retirees.

Having worked for the Bickham Coal and Bloomfield

companies I can say they treat their employees with care and respect.

They are an Australian company who would bring nothing but positives for the local area, towns, businesses and employment if it were to proceed.

I believe they have done their utmost to meet the concerns of opposing groups and are always willing to be upfront.

Remember in the past Murrurundi was no stranger to mine activity with the Timor shale oil refinery running the towns economy for many years.

This opportunity is too good to pass up. It is time to grab it, move forward, and let Murrurundi prosper again.

**Simon Ford  
Murrurundi**