

HD **Fears mine is just the beginning**

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Brian and Diana Dale's current view from their Morangup **property**.

MORANGUP residents are concerned a **Chinese**-backed partnership to mine prime countryside next to Avon National **Park** could be "the thin end of the wedge", as the **company** has interests in land pockets across the Darling Scarp.

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Bauxite Alumina Joint Ventures (BAJV) intends to seek State Government environmental approval early next year to mine 220 million tonnes of bauxite, stretching 20km from near Wundowie to 1.5 km from the Avon River and main rail link to Perth.

The 55sq km open-cut, mine would open in 2017, run for at least 25 years, and inject about \$3 billion into the WA economy, said BAJV.

Concerned Morangup resident Brian Dale said the minesite would replace the rural views from his 40ha hobby farm in Jingaling Brook Road, where he has lived for the past 12 years.

"BAJV states on their website that the recourse averages 3.7 metres in depth, yet on the BRL (partner) website, it states the bauxite zone is up to 17 metres in thickness," Mr Dale said. "If that is the case, the hill behind us will disappear should the mine **site** go ahead.

"It's only be a matter of time before other areas of the Darling Scarp are mined, including tenements in the shires of Mundaring, Chittering, Swan and Northam."

Mr Dale is a member of the new Avon and Hills Mining Awareness **Group**, founded to seek and share information about mining ventures in the Hills.

"We object to BAJV stating (on their website) the Morangup project is 'fairly' remote; we are only 35 minutes to Midland and not out the back of Kalgoorlie," Mr Dale said.

"There are about 400 homes here, that's about a third of the Toodyay townsite, and we are all worried about the value of our properties going down.

"Would you **buy** here now?"

Many Morangup residents believe they have been kept in the dark about the proposal, Mr Dale said, and questions concerning the impact of dust, noise, rainwater supplies, traffic and the environment have yet to be answered.

BAJV general manager Bill Moss said the **company**'s presence in the area began three years ago with letters inviting landowners to discuss the possibility of bauxite exploration on their land.

"The project will be subject to formal assessment by the Environmental Protection Authority and the Department of Mines and Petroleum, and this process will include requirements for community consultation," Mr Moss said.

Over the coming months, he said, more details would become available, including a timeline, letters and additional updates on the **company**'s website.

"We will be looking to establish a shop front in Toodyay and a community consultative committee," he said.

Mr Moss said the Morangup mine project, named Felicitas, would create 120 new full-time jobs, with additional opportunities for local suppliers, trades and services at the **site**.

"We believe many locals living in Toodyay and the district have the skills suitable to work in a local mining operation," he said.

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