

Subject: FW: National Radioactive Waste Disposal.
Date: Thursday, 11 March 2010 11:39:39 AM

Sirs/Mesdames,

In 1972 I was the Surveyor for Queensland Coal, a subsidiary of BHP, based at their mine at Blackwater called Leichhardt Colliery. This mine was not successful because of a peculiar phenomenon called soda water bursts. Periodically, during and after exposing a new coal face the coal from the sides of the road would be forced out in a vigorous manner, the air would be like the bottom of a glass of soda water, all bubbles. I left Queensland Coal in 1974 for the Melbourne Underground Rail, Consulting Engineers, not liking city life I obtained the Surveyors position at Mary Kathleen Uranium for the second operation. In the 1980's I was the Surveyor for Capricorn Coal at Middlemount. The Geologist at German Creek had been the Geologist/Surveyor at Leichhardt after me, he told me that the mine had closed due to the soda bursts that he had investigated and could offer no explanation due to their random nature and that quite a distance of tunnels had been driven but no extraction of coal pillars. The mine would probably need rehabilitating by now. The shafts were around 300 metres deep. Since no coal pillars were extracted the roof would be stable and the tunnels still there. These tunnels could be used for storing radioactive waste of all kinds. The mine closed because without pillar extraction or longwall face extraction the mine would never be economic. Not enough coal could be obtained to pay the bills. The existing tunnels could be extended to accommodate more waste for a permanent receipt of waste, which I understand is required by the radioactive waste industry. This mine could be so used, all waste being delivered by rail from Port Alma or elsewhere right to the mine shafts.

The ownership of the land has probably reverted back to the Queensland Government by now.

I submit that the idea is worthy of consideration bearing that the strata is stable, dry, and has been there for a few years. Metaliferous mines such as Mount Isa are not suitable due to the chemicals in the rock making acid which could affect the radioactive containers. Other Coal mines are not suitable due to large areas of coal extraction making the roof unstable and has probably collapsed by now and cannot be entered. Keith Dawson,