

**Question on Notice  
No. 144  
Asked on 19 March 2004**

MR T MULHERIN asked the Minister for Communities, Disability Services and Seniors (MR PITT)-

**QUESTION:**

With reference to a website launched recently at the Community Engagement Showcase in Rockhampton –

How was this website developed and how will it facilitate and support social and economic research into issues impacting on the coal mining communities in the Bowen Basin?

**ANSWER:**

The Bowen Basin area in Central Queensland is Australia's premier coal producing area, extending over approximately 60,000 square kilometres from the historic towns of Collinsville in the north to Theodore in the south. This area produces 83% of our export coal. Within the Bowen Basin, there are 15 communities with a combined population of approximately 42,000, who are dependent on coal mining.

The Mackay/Whitsunday and Central Queensland Regional offices of the Department of Communities have been involved in developing, supporting and promoting partnerships between industry, local government, community, other government agencies and universities that contribute to improving the well-being of the people who live in those communities.

In May 2003, they facilitated a workshop in Emerald for a group of individuals and research institutions with a shared interest in the social and economic development of the Bowen Basin.

As a result, the Bowen Basin Researchers' Network was formed and the Multimedia Design Centre, University of Central Queensland was commissioned by the Department of Communities to develop a website for the network.

When the website was launched on 16 April 2004 by my Ministerial colleague, the Honourable Robert Schwarten MP, Minister for Public Works, Housing and Racing, he paid tribute to Professor Bob Miles and the Institute for Sustainable Development, University of Central Queensland for hosting and maintaining the website on behalf of the Bowen Basin Researchers' Network. I add my sincere thanks to the Institute.

The website is available at <http://www.bowenbasin.cqu.edu.au>

The website will facilitate and support social and economic research on issues impacting on the coal mining communities of the Bowen Basin. It is an excellent example of a successful partnerships and collaboration between government, industry and universities.

Over the last five years, Bowen Basin communities have experienced major social and economic changes as a result of restructuring and technological adjustments in the mining industry.

Research is important in helping to understand the impact of these changes on local residents.

The Queensland Resources Council has reviewed and approved the content of the website, which contains information on current and proposed research projects, community demographics, coal mine and export terminal data and events of interest to mining communities.

The website will continue to provide up-to-date and relevant information and also foster research collaboration. It will assist the work of all departments, agencies and local governments operating in the Bowen Basin and will be invaluable to students, community members and investors alike.