



## Down, Down And Digging



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The Maxwell Underground Mine has gone from being a mere idea on a piece of paper, to exporting some of the highest quality coal in the Hunter Valley overseas.

Approved by the NSW Government at the end of 2020, Malabar dug the first coal in March this year and will continue to do so for at least another 25 years.

Malabar General Manager James Johnson said it's pleasing to see all of their hard work become a reality.

“It is wonderful seeing a project like this developed with the broad support we have and continue to have from the community.

“We are very proud and grateful of our team at the Maxwell Mine which has and continue to work very hard as we fully develop the mine over the next two years,” said James.

“That team includes Malabar staff, our mining contractors PIMS and Pybar and a long list of construction contractors, consultants and suppliers.”

After the first sod was turned, the topsoil in the area was stockpiled and construction got underway on the first portal entry to access the Whynot Seam bord and pillar operation. That entry was fully constructed by March with the first coal mined on March 17. It has a life expectancy of about ten years.

A contract was awarded to PIMS Mining for the initial three years of bord and pillar mining of the Whynot seam. A total of 130 jobs will be created under that contract which James said will help boost local employment and economic activity in the Upper Hunter.

Meantime, construction is well advanced on the second portal entry which will provide access to the deeper Woodlands Hill, Arrowfield and Bowfield seams. The Malabar team and the Pybar Mining Services team are only a couple of weeks away from starting the drift entries which will be mined by the “longwall” mining method.

“In terms of other milestones, as part of the project we have recommissioned the coal handling and preparation plant (CHPP),” said James.

**“In May we produced our first product coal onto the stockpiles, which was another significant milestone, so we will soon be making our first export coal sales.”**

During construction, Malabar has more than 200 people on site. Then, once they are at full operation across the two seams, more than 400 people will be working at the mine.

“We’ll have about 400 people engaged in the project directly and then beyond that as we know there are a lot of indirect jobs for suppliers ongoing in the community for things that we need,” said James.

At that full capacity, the mine will provide \$68 million in wages to the local economy each year.

Malabar is continuing to work on its renewable energy projects as well including the Maxwell Solar Farm which is an approved 25-megawatt solar farm located on the rehabilitated land within the site, and the potentially much larger Voltere Solar Farm.

“The coal in the Hunter Valley is some of the best in the world and it is sought after so seeing a project like this gain so much support just demonstrates that it can coexist in the transition that is going on.

“We strike that balance between premium (metallurgical) coal targeted at steel-making, as well as supporting the transition in the Hunter through our large-scale renewable projects.

“We don’t refer to the mine as a project anymore, we refer to it as the Maxwell Underground Mine because we are operating and we’re providing many long-term jobs for local people,” said James.

Malabar is continuing to look for staff with a wide range of current opportunities available across all aspects of mining and operations. Job opportunities can be found on the Malabar website at <https://malabarresources.com.au/people-careers>.