

Visiting pupils venture out of classroom to visit Malabar Coal's Maxwell Infrastructure site at Muswellbrook

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A NUMBER of Tamworth students ventured out of the classroom for a unique experience near Muswellbrook last month.

The Year 12 pupils from Calrossy Anglican School visited Malabar Coal's Maxwell Infrastructure site, the area formerly known as Drayton South.

The students, who are completing their Earth and Environmental Science studies as part of their Higher School Certificate, toured the rehabilitated grazing pastures and infrastructure facilities, and heard presentations from geologist Teresa Coleman, ecologist Tas Willis and environment and community manager Donna McLaughlin.

Ms McLaughlin said the tour was a tremendous opportunity to teach the youngsters about the full journey of coal mining, from the science behind exploration through to the complete rehab of the mine site.

"Our time on site with the students was very rewarding," she explained.

"In addition to delving into the detail about coal exploration, we hope they left with a better understanding of everything that needs to be considered before and after mining.

"For example, we discussed methods for preserving cultural and indigenous heritage and how we create a post-mining landscape capable of sustaining productive land use.

"And, as with all these considerations, we emphasised the importance of listening to the local community, whose standards ultimately determine the success of a mine.

"I also hope we showed the students a future career path, whether it be managing relationships in the local community or developing geological models for underground mines."

Malabar chairman Wayne Seabrook welcomed the engagement with Calrossy Anglican School, which is the first school to visit Maxwell Infrastructure since the company took ownership in 2018.

"We've had fantastic feedback from the students and teachers about the visit," he said.

"So much so, that we've already begun discussions with the school about bringing future Earth and Environmental Science classes to site."

Already 640 hectares of land have been rehabilitated to pasture and woodland.

In May alone, the company planted more than 8000 tube stock in existing woodland rehabilitation areas.

The company's commitment is to deliver a far more visually appealing final rehabilitation outcome by using reject stone and rock from underground operations at the proposed Maxwell Underground to fill the legacy voids at the Drayton mine.