

## 50 Angus cross Charolais steers flourishing on rehabilitated pasture at former Drayton open cut mine site near Muswellbrook



Local agistee Rob Parish and Malabar Coals environment and community manager Donna McLaughlin with cattle on rehabilitated pasture.

MINE rehab and cattle grazing don't usually go hand-in-hand within the Upper Hunter.

But, over the past six months, Malabar Coal has hosted 50 Angus cross Charolais steers on rehabilitated terrain at the now closed Drayton location near Muswellbrook.

As the company restores the former open cut mine site, now known as Maxwell Infrastructure, to pastures and native woodland, it has been in conversation with its neighbours and local farmers about alternative uses for the land as it is made productive and sustainable for future generations.

Malabar chairman Wayne Seabrook said the introduction of the cattle demonstrated an encouraging trend toward mining and farming working together.

"They are coming along well and have put on weight since coming to site," he explained.

"It's pleasing to see the cattle thrive on the rehabilitated land, given the drought conditions being experienced in the Hunter Valley.

"The land we are rehabilitating was grazed prior to mining and we're now showing that it can be returned to healthy grazing pastures.

"Bringing the steers onto the land is just one small example of where mining and farming can work together productively for the benefit of the environment and the local community."



Local agister Rob Parish purchased the steers from Coolie Angus, a beef cattle business based in the hills of Merriwa, with Malabar providing the land, water and fencing for grazing.

"It's great collaborating with a responsible mining company that understands the importance of grazing for farmers and their cattle," he said.

Having the steers on the rehabilitated pasture is also expected to benefit the land.

It should allow greater control over weed species, promote species diversity and reduce the risk of bushfire.

Rehabilitated pasture can also provide more feed for stock during the drier conditions than the non-rehabilitated land.

In addition to the introduction of the steers, Malabar has started technical studies to support a development application for the Maxwell Solar Project.

The initiative is proposed to have an installed capacity of about 25MW and provide 50 more jobs for the local area during construction.

Working at capacity, the solar farm would generate enough energy to power about 10,000 homes.