Bathurst Resources is a modern New Zealand coal mining company with operations on the West Coast and Southland.

ENVIRONMENT

There is no question mining impacts the environment. But the affected area is small.

Today, mining companies all work to ensure their environmental impacts are minimised and the post-mining landform is fully rehabilitated.

In New Zealand, less than 0.1 per cent of land is used for mining, while 33 per cent is protected for conserving biodiversity.

Bathurst managers bring a wealth of environmental expertise to the West Coast and Southland, having won many awards for environmental practices in their careers.

This is important to the team and is ingrained in the company's ethos.

Rehabilitation of the natural environment, replanting and nature regeneration is a top priority for the company, as is working with the community to ensure that the final landform is what the community wants.

Bathurst also invests significantly in other projects to enhance and protect the environment, including initiatives to protect the great spotted kiwi in the Heaphy River area and funding the protection of plants and animals on the Denniston Plateau.

Net gain for conservation

As well as rehabilitation measures around the Denniston Plateau, Bathurst has worked with the Department of Conservation to achieve a net gain to the conservation estate.

Bathurst has committed to undertake predator management over 5,620 hectares of the Heaphy region for at least 35 years to help protect and monitor populations of the great spotted kiwi. This work will occur in the Heaphy Flats (220 ha), Southern Heaphy Silver Beach Forest (3,400 ha), and Ryan Creek Hard Beech Rimu Forest (2,000 ha).

Independent assessment

An Environmental Reference Group chaired by senior New Zealand conservationist Guy Salmon has been established to actively monitor and guide the environment performance of Bathurst in New Zealand.

The group is known as the "Kaitiaki" group – a Maori name which embodies the concept of guardianship of the natural environment.

The group comprises independent experts with a variety of skills and backgrounds relevant to the company's operations. The group reports directly to the company Board and is tasked with ensuring Bathurst applies best practice in its environmental management and that it is responsive to the changing needs and expectations of stakeholders and the national community.

Reducing impacts

Mining involves a number of environmental challenges, including soil erosion, water management, impact on fauna and flora, and effects on local communities. Bathurst is acutely aware of these impacts, and is using best-practice modern mining techniques to minimise them.

- ### Protecting current inhabitants

  With guidance from the Department of Conservation, Bathurst will put significant effort into rehabilitation and protection of flora and fauna on the Denniston Plateau and other areas. This includes establishing a trust fund for regenerating the Escarpment mine area, protecting species such as the powelliphanta land snails and western weka, and supporting control of predators, pests and weeds.

- ### Rehabilitation

  Bathurst's rehabilitation plans are incorporated into resource consent applications, and are an on-going process. Once coal has been removed from an area, Bathurst replaces the earth in its correct layers, shape and contour. Experts are employed to manage the rehabilitation process. They undertake extensive trials to find out the best way to re-establish the appropriate vegetation in each particular environment.

- ### Dust reduction

  Bathurst employs best practice to reduce dust and noise impacts. At the Takitimu mine, for example, Bathurst has installed monitors that measure wind speed, temperature and particulate levels in the ambient air. In dusty conditions, the monitors automatically trigger a series of sprinklers. The sprinklers can also be controlled remotely by mobile phone.

- ### Water management

  The Buller Coalfield receives seven metres of rain a year. Clean surface water is diverted from mine sites, and all water from mines is checked to ensure it is free of harmful metals and treated if necessary before it flows back into natural waterways.

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