

## **Downside of mining**

Oil with your cheese? Stratford District Council's new report (TDN 11/3/13) states the obvious in asserting that dairying has, to date, had a greater effect on Taranaki's rural landscapes than mining. Dairying has operated here for more than a century and, as any view of Google Earth will attest, occupies most suitable land. Yet Mike Avery's (the report's author) claim that mining's rapid expansion is sustainable in maintaining rural amenity is in direct contrast to the experiences of many local residents, from Kapuni to Tikorangi. Surprisingly, it also seems to contradict Mr. Avery's earlier comments, reported last November. Then he compared Tag Oil's illegal flaring of volatile hydrocarbons around Ngaere to the 'bowels of Mordor', home of the evil Sauron in JRR Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, from where he launched his devastating attacks on the people of Middle Earth. Perhaps Mr. Avery now considers the bowels of Mordor to be an improvement on the previously quiet, peacefully bucolic situation there? And it appears newly appointed Energy Minister Simon Bridges agrees. After all, his government is banking on the economic 'benefits', this despite the findings of major international economic studies, including the Stern and Garnaut reports. These clearly show that costs of continued expansion of fossil fuels far outweigh benefits. Unfortunately, this is already beginning to occur, with our destabilized climate system playing havoc with New Zealand agriculture. And at what real cost to local people and the NZ economy - it's well past time our governments did the sums.

Letter by Lyndon DeVantier, published in Taranaki Daily News on 14 March 2013