



Collinsville Police's Chris Farlow and the ambulance service's Mistey Curran.



QCoal's managing director Chris Wallin and Leyton's Craig Porter.



Burdekin MP Rosemary Menkens chats with the new Japanese Consular General to Queensland Makoto Hinel.



Whitsunday Regional Council town planner Barry Menzies.



Premier Anna Bligh and Mines Minister Geoff Wilson pose with Sonoma Coal mine workers before the official opening.

Mine's clear sign of confidence in future

QCOAL Sonoma's \$200 million new coal mine is clear evidence of both the buoyant world coal demand and confidence investors have in the Queensland coal industry's future, according to Premier Anna Bligh.

"Demand's almost insatiable, both for coal used in steel making and electricity generation and does not look like slowing down in the near future," she said in officially opening the Sonoma mine last Friday.

She said that demand was being fuelled by rapid growth in China and India and by ongoing growth in more traditional markets like Japan and Korea.

QCoal Sonoma's mine, 6km south of Collinsville, is producing 2 million tonnes a year of coking and thermal coal, which will build up to 4 million tonnes a year. The coal is railed to the Abbot Point Coal Terminal for export.

Mines Minister Geoff Wilson said that new mines like Sonoma ensured that the state's mining industry remained strong and productive into the future.

Ms Bligh said in 2006-2007, eight new coal mines began



LEFT: Posing for a photograph before the official opening of the Sonoma mine are JFE Steel president Hajime Bada, Japanese Ambassador to Australia Takaaki Kojima and JFE Shoji trade Corporation's Miklo Fukushima.

production; two, including Sonoma, were still being constructed, and 10 coal projects were advanced.

She praised Sonoma's investors and reminded them that they too were part of sharing the industry's other great challenge - clean coal technology.

"Sonoma Mine is now part of one of the world's greatest coal mining industries and it will play its part along with the

other miners in meeting challenges the industries faces," she said.

"Through substantial investment its owners have made, Sonoma has created 150 full-time jobs as well as substantial indirect jobs.

QCoal Sonoma Pty Ltd is a privately-owned Queensland company.

Its joint venture partners are:
* Cleveland Cliffs, an iron ore

mining and processing company that is the majority owner of the Australian listed company, Portman Mining;

* JFE Shoji which is part of the JFE Steel Group, the second largest steel producer in Japan;

* China Steel, the largest steel-maker in Taiwan; and

* Watami Trading, a Hong Kong-based marketing company.



Bowen's Jim Gaston with Biri traditional landowners Frank and Allan Fisher at the opening.



Premier Anna Bligh, and Qcoal's Chris Wallin, left, shake hands after unveiling a plaque to mark the official opening. The plaque was mounted on a piece of Burdekin plum timber by Russell Claes, above, a contractor at the mine.



Geoff Wilson and Anna Bligh are welcomed by site manager David Nebauer.