

Two new coking coal export mines planned for West Coast

26 January 2004 - Feasibility studies are planned to be completed in 2004 for a proposed new opencast mine at Millerton, north of Westport, and an underground mine at Upper Seven Mile, north of Greymouth, Solid Energy chief executive Don Elder said.

Millerton lies within the Stockton opencast mine licence area and would be an extension of that mine, Dr Elder said.

The mine would probably operate as an extra shift at Stockton and would not create any extra jobs. It could produce about 500,000 tonnes of coal a year, depending on how much coal had been consumed in an underground fire which had smouldered at the mine for decades.

The Upper Seven Mile mine would be about half the size of Spring Creek mine, with a workforce of perhaps 60 or 70. It contained three underground blocks of coal which might be mined simultaneously from one entrance.

The high quality coking coal from both new mines would be exported.