



Viv Forbes took his first look at the Bowen Basin in 1961 as an 18 year old junior geologist working for Queensland's Geological Survey Office. As the Queensland rep for the Bowen Basin mapping team, he spent 5 years mapping the basin from Collinsville to Injune.

Deciding his temperament didn't suit the public service, Viv did a stint as an exploration geologist for United Uranium in the Northern Territory before heading to the Mount Isa Mine to work as a statistician, and then went on to a role as an investment analyst at Goldfields in Sydney.

The job was great, but Viv and his wife Judy decided Sydney was not the place for bushies like them, so they sold up and moved to Goonyella where Viv had been offered a job doing coal exploration for the Utah Development Company. That led on to Brisbane and a role as an investment analyst for MIM, who owned the Collinsville Coal Mine. Frustrated by his experiences in that business, Viv decided two things – never to work for a salary again, and never to go into partnership with anyone except Judy.

Viv assisted Brian Johnson with the assessment and acquisition of the South Blackwater Coal Mine, helping to transform the mine into an efficient, profitable coal producer. The mine was subsequently sold to QCT, with Viv staying involved in that business until he received a call from Brian Johnson wanting help finding another coal investment in Queensland. He did, helping with the acquisition of Burton Downs Coal which he subsequently renamed Burton Coal.

The day the Burton Coal Mine was opened in 1995 by Premier Peter Beattie was the high point of Viv's coal career, and the mine, sold shortly after opening to mining giant RAG, became a very profitable enterprise.

Viv went on to consulting and board roles with a number of significant coal companies including Austral Coal, Waratah Coal and Stanmore Coal, where he was invited to the Board by Nick Jorss. That connection led to the return to Viv's involvement with Burton Coal, now owned and operated by Bowen Coking Coal, where Nick is Executive Chairman.

Viv's responsibilities at Burton have spanned all areas of land access and negotiations, infrastructure agreements relating to rail, port, access and water; Government policy initiatives; and reporting.

Brian Johnson once told Viv that "Lang Hancock says you know more about coal than anyone else in Queensland", to which Viv replied, "I may know more than anyone else Lang knows, but that is not saying much." That modest response belies the fact that with a career in geology and mining spanning more than 60 years, much of it specialising in coal, Viv is undoubtedly one of the foremost experts on coal not just in Queensland, but in the world.

Viv has contributed immensely to the body of knowledge of coal, and has been a strong advocate for the mining industry, arguing that it is a vital part of the Australian economy and that it has the potential to provide significant benefits to local communities. He is also a passionate environmentalist, albeit one with a different perspective from many of his contemporaries. Viv has argued that the best way to protect the environment is through responsible resource development providing the economic resources necessary to fund conservation efforts.

Widely respected for his knowledge and expertise in the field of mining, Viv has been a prolific writer on the subject, publishing numerous articles and books on mining and resource development. He is respected for his willingness to engage in dialogue and debate and known for his open-mindedness.

Viv is a true pioneer in the area of mineral exploration and mining, and his insights and expertise have helped shape the way we view the natural world. We are proud to honour his legacy and his long association with the Burton Coal Mine in naming this Mine Village Tavern after him.



VIV FORBES

