



Anyone who doubted the Coromandel Peninsula was sought after by the mining industry need only glance at this map, showing that virtually the whole peninsula is covered with either prospecting or exploration licence areas.

"We don't want mining on the peninsula," says Sue.

Her mother Joyce enjoys the peace of the bay.

"I remember seeing the porpoises migrate twice yearly and the birdlife, with the bellbirds attracted to the bottlebrush and the dotterels nesting on the sand dunes," she says.

So far the families have spent \$40,000 preparing for the case against the miners. But in addition to that cost is the cost of an uncertain future, of work not carried out on the farm because it might be soon undone by a miner's pit.

They are not impressed by the present mining laws. Thanks to the Mining Act, Barrack Mining can move onto their farm against their wishes. Their only recourse is to the Planning Tribunal, but the odds are heavily stacked against them as the legislation favours mining. Mining companies invariably persuade the Planning Tribunal to reject landowners' appeals.

Applied Geology Associates, the New Zealand agent acting on behalf of Barrack, believe that monetary compensation is the panacea for the Chapman's and Edens' ills.

"I know from their point of view it is an intrusion of lifestyle and privacy. They want to protect their land. Barrack has offered far more compensation than the law provides for, but they chose to refuse it," says Rob Owen of Applied Geology Associates.

And that, for the moment, is where the issue stands: Barrack and Applied Geology Associates perplexed over why someone should refuse an offer "generous to an extent which is unnecessary"; a family determined to refuse that "generosity" in preference for an undisturbed lifestyle in which dotterels, brown teal and porpoises continue to enrich their souls.

The Mining Legislation – What's Wrong With It

THE CHAPMANS AND EDENS would not be in the position they are if the law was framed more fairly.

When Geoffrey Palmer launched his resource management law reform he promised a major overhaul of the present mining legislation with its draconian provisions in favour of mining. But his Resource Management Bill, introduced late last year and at a select committee at the time of writing, has failed to tackle the major problems with mining legislation.

The Bill does not deal with the most basic concern of all: what if a landowner does not want mining on his or her land? No other land-use industry has this special privilege. The mining industry is also the

only one that can force its way onto conservation land as the present power of the Minister of Conservation to veto mining has been removed. Mining industry pressure on Prime Minister Palmer has persuaded him to back mining minister David Butler rather than Conservation Minister Philip Woollaston. However, the recent announcement by Mr Woollaston to ban mining from national parks and specially protected areas is a welcome first step in protecting conservation land.

Forest and Bird and other conservation groups are working with Federated Farmers to counter the mining industry lobby and persuade the Prime Minister to give landowners the right of veto for their

own land. The Minister of Conservation must have the right to veto mining on other conservation lands.

New Zealand's conservation estate is under attack from overseas mining companies. Conservation values on private land are also under threat. To safeguard our remaining natural areas and the rural way of life, we need to give the right to say no to mining to those who have stewardship over the land. The mining industry is well known for its insensitivity to the values of natural ecosystems or to allowing landowners such as Skipper Chapman the right to undisturbed occupation of their land. ✎