

Good Morning/Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen

My name is Ben Smith and I would like to thank the Planning Assessment Committee for the opportunity to speak here today. Unlike the people who have pontificated their so called knowledgeable opinion, in opposition to this modification, I will remain focused on what the real issues of the Springvale modification request are.

First and foremost the request to increase fulltime employment numbers at Springvale from 310 to 450 employees, would be a welcomed relief to many young families, allowing them the possibility of seeking stable secure employment within the district. As a father and husband I could not imagine what it is like to have to travel away from your loved ones in order to seek gainful employment.

These employment opportunities will not be achievable if the requested increase in annual productivity from 4.5 million tonnes to 5.5 million tonnes per annum, and the requested upscaling of surface coal storage facilities are not granted. As most would agree without the capacity to react to market fluctuations and demands, it could adversely affect the viability of Centennial's Springvale operation, rendering not just any new employment opportunities unviable, but possibly those jobs of the men and women currently employed there.

The social and economic factors in relation to the granting of this modification, such as the increase in financial benefits for the state of NSW, of approximately 32 million dollars over and above the current projected benefits from the mine, can only be seen as a positive. The modification would not only inject financial benefits to the Local Government Area, but would contribute greatly in reducing Lithgow's unemployment rate, which as of December 2016 was at 6.23% according to ID Community Demographic Resources.

The above benefits far outweigh any of the perceived negligible negative impacts on the environment due to this modification. Some may argue that the increased productivity could lead to an increase in Greenhouse Gas Emissions, however the Queensland Land Court's decision in the case of *Hancock Coal v Department of Environment and Heritage Protection* stated that if the demand for coal was not met by the mine in question in that case (Alpha Mine), it will be met from other mines with the same or possibly worse consequences in relation to Greenhouse Gas Emissions. It would be common sense to apply the same reasoning to the Springvale situation.

It should also be noted that if this notification is to be granted, it will not increase size of the underground workings of the mine, and therefore there will be no environmental concerns outside those that are already addressed in the current approvals. If anything the increase in production should expedite the extraction of the finite coal resources within the Springvale lease.

I look forward to a timely decision from the Planning Assessment Committee so that we at Springvale can get back to doing what we do well and that is keeping the lights on in the great state of New South Wales

Thank you for your time today.