38.

Greg Guest

[redacted]

Lithgow NSW 2790

I was born in Lithgow and have worked for 38 years in the mining industry in the Lithgow region and currently Work for Centennial Coal at Airly Mine.

I am speaking in support of the Department of Planning and Environments position that the "Springvale Water treatment Project" should be approved.

Although I am a Centennial employee I find that I am speaking on behalf of myself, the Mine and Power industry workers, their families, the majority of residents in the Lithgow region and the majority of electricity consumers of NSW.

I also feel that I am speaking for the electricity consumers in other States that may call upon NSW to provide the electricity that they no longer have the capacity to produce for themselves in times of high demand, which in this day and age is an absolute disgrace.

Springvale currently has a full time workforce of approximately 363 employees with the potential to increase to 410.

Coal mining is still the major employer in the Lithgow region with more than 10% of the workforce working in mining related jobs whilst Mt Piper power station has approximately 290 employees.

The Springvale Water Treatment Project is essential to the operations of Springvale and Angus Place mines and to ensure a secure coal supply to Mt Piper Power Station.

Mt Piper supplies 15% of the States Power needs, utilising two 700 MW steam coal fired turbines with the capacity to meet the energy needs of approx. 1.18 million homes, and If the sun does not shine and the wind does not blow Mt piper power station will still supply electricity to those 1.18 million homes in NSW.

As stated in the Planning & Environment assessment Report;

"The Lithgow region is a strategically important coal mining centre that is important for ***cost effective*** generation of electricity for Sydney and NSW".

The furnaces at Mt Piper are designed to utilise the characteristics of the local coal suppliers to improve efficiency and to keep the stations emissions below statutory requirements.

Mt Piper draws its cooling water from Lyell Dam and Thompsons Creek Dam, both of which were specifically built to supply water to the power station.

During the exhibition period of the Springvale Water Treatment project in 2016, 453 submissions were received.

7 from Government agencies, 5 from special interest groups and 441 from the general public.

The majority of these submissions raised concerns with the project. The key issue raised was the potential impacts on the water catchment from the discharge of treated mine water into Wangcol Creek.

It must be pointed out, as stated in the Planning & Environment Assessment Report, "that the lower reaches of the Coxs River catchment generally have high water quality with low salinity, the upper reaches are somewhat degraded and contain moderate salinity largely due to historical pressures from the predominant land uses in the region which not only include mining, but commercial forestry and agriculture".

Due to the Government and Community concerns of discharging into Wangcol Creek the project was amended to transfer treated water to the Thompsons Creek Reservoir.

The Springvale Water Transfer Project is to cost in excess of 100 million dollars and involves a 15 kilometre water transfer pipeline to pipe 42 megalitres of mine water a day from Springvale mine to the Power Station and a desalination plant to treat the water for use in the cooling towers.

This will remove the need to discharge mine water to the drinking water catchment.

The pipeline will closely follow existing infrastructure on the Newnes Plateau, ash pipelines, haul roads and overland conveyors minimising impacts to the environment.

Currently Mt Piper Power Station utilises water from the Lyell dam which is pumped to Thompsons Creek dam then onto the power station.

With the majority of water for the Power Station to be supplied by the mines, the Lyell dam should remain close to, or at capacity.

The Thompson Creek dam has a poor catchment area so the water level will be easily maintained with the input of the treated mine water and Power station consumption.

The end result being that the Springvale Water treatment project will assist Energy Australia to drought proof Mt Piper Power station and reduce the need to draw upon water from the local catchment areas. This in turn will provide increased environmental flows to the Coxes River.

The dams should remain at capacity or near capacity except perhaps in times of severe drought but even then this should have no impact on the ability to generate power.

Tourism will benefit from the fisherman who visit the Lithgow regions Rivers, creeks and dams and also from the boat enthusiasts who utilise the dams and their facilities all year round.

The project itself will provide employment for over 50 people in the construction phase and a approximately 5 full time employees to operate the system once completed.

The project is a win for the environment, a win for the Mines, a win for the Power station, a win for the local community and the recreational users of the dams and river, a win for the electricity consumers of NSW and quite possibly a win for the electricity consumers of other states.