

Good morning, my name is John Tilley and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. I'm here in support of the proposed modifications for Springvale.

I am currently an employee of Springvale Colliery. I have worked for Centennial Coal as a Multi-skilled Mineworker across two sites for over 20 years and have lived in the area all of my life. My daughter is the 5th generation of my family to be born and raised in the area with 15 plus of her direct relatives working or having worked in the coal industry.

This is the fifth time I have felt it necessary to speak at a PAC Hearing in support of my job as well as the jobs of my workmates. This is not a task I take lightly, as I would much prefer to be standing underground with 400m of NSW above my head rather than standing here today at this dais.

Over these previous PAC Hearings I have seen all sorts of tactics used by professional lobbyists, who have a single-minded focus against coalmining which puts people's livelihoods at risk and shows scant regard for the ramifications on people's lives and the community to which the majority have no attachment.

The Environmental Defenders Office lays out a blueprint on their website for, in their words "Influencing the decision". One of their many tactics is the use of form letters as you only need 25 submissions to initiate a PAC Hearing. I believe that 'form letters' which are now used extensively by environmental lobbyists should be counted as 1 in total.

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In the NSW Planning & Environment Assessment Report for the Springvale Mine Extension Project (Mod 2) it states that “of the 328 objections from the general public, 309 were submitted using a form letter”. This tactic seems to be used to clog the system and tie up the process; thus stretching the process out – time is money and could lead companies to be outside of their consent to operate. We have seen what happens when this tactic is used successfully with the Springvale employees having already spent 8 weeks with no work while waiting on the outcome of these somewhat lengthy processes. I am sure that following speakers will discuss this in greater detail as it was a very distressing time for the workers, their families and the community. I firmly believe that the PAC process needs to be altered to stop the use of form letters as it distorts the balance of those ‘for and against’ a proposal.

Here today we will hear a lot of opinion ‘for and against’ most of which has been expressed at previous PAC Hearings. As this is the fourth hearing concerning Springvale there is not a great deal more that either side can express other than the fact that there is no coming back from this. If this is not passed it signs the death warrant for Springvale, Mount Piper Power Station and the Lithgow area in general. This will be devastating for this community.

Given that the proposed modifications improve on the original proposal, it would seem unreasonable not to approve these submissions in the earliest possible timeframe.

These proposed modifications, in my opinion, don't impact on Wangcol Creek, swamps, waterfalls, the Cox's River or Sydney's Drinking Water as the lobbyists and individuals from near and far would have you believe. These proposed modifications, as far as I can see, have a neutral or beneficial effect on the environment. According to the NSW Government Department of Planning and Environment Assessment Report of the Springvale Water Treatment Project "...on balance, the Department is satisfied that the proposed treatment of mine water at Mount Piper Power Station would be substantially beneficial to Sydney's drinking water catchment, and is in accordance with the Drinking Water Catchment State Environmental Planning Policy".

In my opinion the benefits of this proposed modification greatly outweigh any perceived negative impacts expressed by individuals or groups (in their form letter) opposing such projects based on a single agenda of opposition to mining and development in general.

Energy security has been in the national spotlight recently and has proved to be one of the nation's priorities.

Springvale is the only supplier of coal to Mount Piper which is responsible for producing around 15% of the States power

and employees approximately 300 people. The detractors of this proposed modification do not address how this demand is going to be met if Springvale is no longer a viable operation. This will not only have a major impact on our local community, but will have implications on a state and national level. In addition to the supply of coal, Springvale will now, also, effectively be 'drought proofing' the power station.

The original timeframe for a project of this magnitude was at best unrealistic; 2015 to 2017 – less than 2 years. In this time however, due diligence has been undertaken by Centennial and Energy Australia to ensure a greater outcome for the environment and the community than was originally required. Let's face it, it takes over 12 months to build a house, how could you possibly design, plan and construct a \$100m water treatment project in 21 months.

I want to make this short and sweet today as I feel there are smarter people than me who have been paid a lot of money to prepare thorough reports and submissions for the relevant government agencies in regards to these proposed modifications addressing all issues raised so far in a more detailed way than I can put forward today. But, once again I would like to reiterate, this is not only about coal mining, energy production or the environment, this is about people and the community of Lithgow and surrounds.

Thank you for your time today.