

PAC PUBLIC MEETING THURSDAY 7 DECEMBER 2017

Hello, my name is Michael Schofield & I was born & raised in Cessnock in the lower Hunter Valley. Both my father & grandfather were underground coal miners, working at various coal mines in the local area. My oldest son, Dominic is also an underground coal miner working as an electrician at a local mine after completing his apprenticeship at the Wambo coal mine. This, he has only achieved recently having had to move to Queensland for work when local employment opportunities dried up. This had a devastating effect on him & his young family forcing them to move away from the family support to achieve employment.

Having lived in this area for all of my 51 years I have seen the benefits of underground mining & the devastating effects on families & communities when mining ceases. I have personally been through this several times & experienced the stress & upheaval that goes with it.

MY submission is to support the South Bates Underground extension for the ongoing employment of not only the 250 plus people who are directly employed by the mine but also people who rely on the operation as a flow on effect , such as the contractors permanently employed there , delivery drivers , cleaners , train crews , apprentices , coal loader employees , etc. .

People at Wambo also support their local community through charitable donations to groups such as the Westpac Rescue Helicopter , Jodie's Place (for female domestic violence sufferers) , Motor Neurone Research Foundation , Hunter Medical Research

Institute & local hospitals just to name a few as well as local families who are experiencing hard times .

So, without the support of these Wambo mineworker's donations, many of these charities will suffer a loss of funds as a result of less donations & a lot of them receive no government assistance & rely on community funding. And might I also add that these organisations, like the helicopter & Motor Neurone Research, etc., are not there for Wambo employees but for the community in general.

These 250 plus Wambo people as well as many , many more indirectly employed people such as contractors etc. which rely on this extension being approved also have families & spend within their local communities at places such as the butcher shop , local restaurants, garages ,paper shops , local tradies , etc. supporting the local economies & creating employment .Without the support of mining , communities such as Muswellbrook , Singleton , Cessnock would lose employment opportunities forcing people to leave these towns for employment opportunities elsewhere ,impacting the local economies . Young people would have to look elsewhere for employment, splitting families & destroying communities.

I have worked in this industry since I was 15 & now at 51, I would not like my chances of gaining re-employment. This would put a strain on me paying off my mortgage, & on my wife to attempt to take up the slack of my lost wage.

Once again I would like to express my support for the Wambo South Bates extension (modification 17) & thank you for the opportunity to express my views.