

Introduction – Robert Cluff – [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

20 years ago my wife and I started a family business now known as [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Over the years the business has grown from one employee to 25, this was 6 months ago, today it employees 19.

The reasons behind this decline in employment are purely demand.

The Wallerawang Power Station closed, then the Angus Place Colliery, both a major hit like never before in our community.

As a small country town which has a lot of small businesses operated by local families & employing local people that are suffering due to these closures.

I believe tourism will grow in the local area, but this predicted growth will not replace what we did have. We have to consider that tourists generally travel on the weekend. This means that the predicted growth in tourism will not replace the local coal mine and power station workers we all relied on during the week.

In addition to this, Tourism does not help the 40 other businesses in Wallerawang that employ the many flow on employees at other business that are not involved in Tourism e.g. the plant hire, engineering businesses, mechanics and even our local schools and pre-schools. This is just Wallerawang alone - look further afield the whole of the Lithgow & Portland areas need more than the tourism industry to survive. I would like to plead with those that feel this is the answer to our area to be realistic and take off the rose coloured glasses; **we need industry in our area to survive.**

Having personally spent 25 years in the coal industry at the face cutting coal and now supporting the industry directly our business alone has had a decline of 30%, even though we have promoted ourselves with advertising in all forms including TV adds to reach out to potential “tourists” this is still not sustaining what we had with our workers and tourists combined. Even though Black Gold Motel is ranked number 2 in the Blue Mountains on the most viewed feedback site TripAdvisor this has not increased our weekly trade. To me this proves tourism alone cannot sustain our businesses here in our area.

Regulations of today in all forms have come a long way from the way we built buildings, workplace rules, and mostly the way we mine.

I would urge those against this application to take a long hard look at what we do and how we do things today not 15 years ago, maybe photos of today not 15 years ago also would be more appropriate on websites and social media.

Saying all this I am sure that the Planning & Assessment Commission making the decision on this application are well informed of what is done today not yesterday's practices.

In closing Lithgow, Wallerawang & Portland areas need this application to be approved for our survival as a community.