

Thank you to the IPC for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding KEPCO's proposed Bylong Coal Project.

For transparency, I am a current employee of the Project and was employed in early 2011 as the Community Liaison Officer and continue that role today nearly eight years later.

I do stress that I am here today however not speaking in my role as Community Liaison Officer, I am speaking because I am a local resident and member of the local community.

I speak as a person who wants to continue to live and work in the area to support my family in years to come.

I relocated to the area from Queensland in 2011 to take up my current role, and ended up purchasing property here because, while working on the Project, we fell in love with the area and wanted to make it our permanent home.

We love the fact that we can enjoy and raise our son in the rural lifestyle similar to what we experienced in our own childhoods all while continuing to work in the mining industry. The Mid-Western region offers something that a lot of mining areas don't – a great family lifestyle and the opportunity to be a part of a vibrant community.

And my employment has certainly provided that. The Bylong Coal Project has introduced us to a wonderful slice of Australia and allowed for my family to be a part of the Bylong and wider Mid-Western communities.

We pay rates to MWRC, we shop locally, we patronise local wineries and restaurants, and we're regular supporters of local events. We volunteer on local committees, actively support the Bylong Rural Bushfire Brigade (where I am the local secretary and training officer), as well as other community organisations within the region.

Our cars are serviced locally. We use local plumbers, electricians, hairdressers, veterinarians and many more local tradespeople.

Our son currently goes to a local day care facility, next year he will be attending Mudgee Preschool, and ultimately our aim is for him to go to primary and high school here.

It may not seem like much, after all, we're only one family, but the flow on effects of my employment at the Bylong Coal Project are undisputable. The approval of the Bylong Coal Project will bring more families to the area, and it will also allow locals seeking work to continue to live and support local, particularly those in the Kandos and Rylstone area.

The Mid-Western Region clearly demonstrates how mining can work well alongside agriculture, viticulture, and tourism. And the region has certainly benefited economically and socially from its diverse workforces.

If approved, the Bylong Project will provide around 650 jobs at peak construction and up to 450 jobs peak operations. KEPCO have made a commitment through a local content policy that the operational workforce be residential, which is a huge boost for the Mid-Western Region.

KEPCO has developed a mine proposal that extensively addresses all issues including environmental, social, heritage, and economic, and has presented a revised mine plan that adheres to NSW government guidelines, policies and statutory requirements.

The Department of Planning and Environment's Final Assessment Report for the Project, dated October 2018, states "*...the Department considers that the benefits of the project outweigh its costs, and that the project is approvable subject to stringent conditions.*"

As a local resident and member of the community, I ask that the Independent Planning Commission for New South Wales, takes this advice and recommends the approval of the Bylong Coal Project.