

Good Morning/Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen

My name is Ben Smith and I would like to thank the Planning Assessment Commission for the opportunity to speak here today. I am not going to speak to you today about local unemployment and how vital these jobs are, or the states need for the 15% of base load power the Mount Piper Power Station produces, even though they are both substantial reasons why this modification should be approved.

I am however going to address the fact that I find it truly absurd that yet again we are hear today as a community fighting for the future of local jobs that are continually under attack from a vocal minority. These organisations, as far as I am concerned have lost all credibility they had, if they ever had any, when they opposed what they stated was a fundamental requirement for Springvale to obtain continued mining consent in September 2015. That fundamental requirement being the construction of a water treatment plant to treat, as they call it mine effluent.

I would now like to apologise for the repetitive nature of the next part of my speech, but I thought it was important to bring to the Planning Assessment Commissions attention the exact requests made during the Springvale mine extension PAC hearing by the majority of the same groups which are opposing the modification today.

The Colong Foundation for Wilderness; Springvale Extension Submission:

‘Before discharge, this mine water must be treated to a standard that protects undisturbed aquatic ecosystems. The eco-toxic mine effluent has unacceptably high levels of turbidity, heavy metals (including aluminium, zinc, copper and nickel) and salinity. The mine effluent, currently running at 12.5Ml/day from LDP009 must be treated using reverse osmosis technology to remove all metals and salts.’

Blue Mountains Conservation Society; Springvale Extension Submission:

‘Any discharge needs to be subject to high level remediation, such as via reverse osmosis filtration, to remove environmentally damaging heavy metals and salts, so the treatment must be undertaken prior to the water leaving the mine site.’

The Lithgow Environmental Group; Springvale Extension Submission:

‘The Lithgow Environment Group believes that all of the proposed minewater discharge of up to 43.8ML/day into the Coxs River via the Springvale-Delta Water Transfer Scheme (SDWTS) must be treated by reverse osmosis to remove salts and metals to a standard which protects the Coxs River and Sydney Drinking Water Supply and near-pristine ecosystems in the World Heritage Area’.

The Colo Committee; Springvale Extension Submission:

‘The proposed Springvale mine extension should not be granted development consent unless: All proposed discharge of up to 43.8ML/day of mine effluent to the Coxs River via the Springvale-Delta Water Transfer Scheme (SDWTS) is treated by reverse osmosis technology to remove salt and metals to a standard that protects, the Coxs River, the downstream drinking water supply and near-pristine ecosystems in the World Heritage Area.’

Stop Coal Seam Gas Blue Mountains; Springvale Extension Submission:

‘The proposed discharge of up to 43.8megalitres/day eco-toxic mine effluent must be treated (if this project is approved) by reverse osmosis technology to remove all metals and salts before discharge to the Coxs River.’

The Nature Conservation Council of New South Wales; Springvale Extension Submission:

‘Before discharge, this mine water must be treated to a standard that protects undisturbed aquatic ecosystems. The eco-toxic mine effluent has unacceptably high levels of turbidity, heavy metals (aluminium, zinc, copper and nickel) and salinity. The mine effluent, currently running at 12.5ML/day must be treated using reverse osmosis technology to remove all metals and salts.’

That it is even at all possible for these organisation to be allowed to object to a project they demanded was a must, shows the level of failure that the New South Wales Government's development application process has come to.

I would argue that these organisations care little for the merits of any project they object to regardless of its environmental benefits or impacts, but only object as a tactic to frustrate the company to the point where they concede due to continual cost of ongoing delays. This attitude is proffered by all environmental groups and can be seen in a Greenpeace mission statement,¹ sent to all other environmental organisation which stated its strategy “is to ‘disrupt

and delay' key projects and infrastructure while gradually eroding public and political support for the industry and continually building the power of the movement to win more."

The simple fact is that this modification will allow the company to achieve that which was requested by those environmental groups, treatment of the mine water. In all reality given the scale of the water treatment plant it was unlikely to be an achievable feat to gain development consent and construct the plant in the time period that was allowed of only two years.

However the requested extension of approximately two years would allow the company to achieve this, given that Centennial submitted the development application in September 2016 and if consent is granted I would reason that two years is a sufficient time frame to see the completed construction of the water treatment plant. I base this reasoning on the fact that Sydney desalination plant was construct in three years and Springvale water treatment plant will be one fifth the size of Sydney's.

So I urge the Planning Assessment Commission to hastily approve this modification so that we can finally look forward to a time of prosperity for the local community.

Thankyou.

1) www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/1206-greenpeace.pdf