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I would like to thank the PAC for letting me speak.

My name is Mathew Houlison and I have been in the coal mines for the last 12 years, I am also a 4<sup>th</sup> generation coal miner and I feel I may be the last.

My wife and I have owned a local business for the last 16 years and have been through many ups and downs. The most recent and damaging to our business was the stand down of Springvale workers in 2015. Our business takings dropped by 50% as people were watching what they were spending, which meant we had to put people off and drop remaining staff's hours to accommodate the down turn. If you were to drive down Lithgow's main street you will notice a lot of empty shops, so not only did the stand down affect the Mines employees but the local business' were heavily impacted.

During this time because of the uncertainty of my employment and having to watch every dollar we were spending my wife was forced to cancel my surprise 40<sup>th</sup>.

I was also forced to seek short term maybe leading to full time employment in my previous trade as a mechanic. The first workshop I walked into had only 2 cars being worked on which left the other mechanics pushing a broom around the workshop so there was no work for me there. The next workshop had already had to let go of a mechanic. All the other workshops I went to had the same problem.

During the forced shut down of Springvale not only did it affect me and my family but it really affected the whole of Lithgow's district area.

We cannot let Springvale Mine close as it will cause a mass exit of individuals, couples and families from the area.

I, like everyone else do not want to have to leave the area to try and get work elsewhere. This would lead to removing my children from their school, put our business on the market along with our home. Whose going to want to buy either of these knowing the effects the mines closure will have on the town.

Keeping all this in mind if Springvale were to close which I am strongly against, not only will it affect the employees but their partners and their jobs.

If families have to leave the area to look for work then the local schools will drop in numbers therefore reduce the number of teachers needed leading to more job losses in the area.

So please take into consideration not only the immediate employees but how far the affects will go in our district.

I am in favour of keeping Springvale Mine open.

One last thing " My biggest fear in life is not working 450m underground but coming home to my family and telling them I am unemployed"

Again I would like to thank the PAC for letting me speak.