

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here today. My name is Travis and as a local resident and former landholder in the Bylong Valley, I am speaking in support of the Bylong Coal Project.

In 2011, the company I worked for had a contract to undertake earthworks and various other aspects of the exploration side of the Bylong Project. At the time I was living in Singleton and the DIDO lifestyle began to take its toll.

In 2013 an opportunity arose to purchase a small property in Bylong and I jumped at it. I liked the idea of being able to live in a great rural area that was close to where I worked, and my aim was to continue working for the project once it gained necessary approvals.

In 2014, the bulk of the exploration came to an end and I was able to stay in the area and find work with one of the mines just north of Mudgee.

KEPCO contacted me towards the end of 2015 to say that modelling showed my property was located within the Zone of Affection and that they wanted to discuss mitigation measures and potential future acquisition.

Due to our newborn son being diagnosed that year with a severe medical condition, I made the decision to sell and relocate closer to the hospital and our medical team in Mudgee. KEPCO provided my family with the certainty we needed even before getting the go ahead on their mine.

The proposed mine will bring about a boost for the local community. Not only in spending with local businesses and funding agreements with Council, but it will bring about social benefits for the entire Mid-Western region.

The mine will attract workers with families who choose to live in Mudgee, Rylstone or Kandos, and there will be those like mine who prefer a rural setting in one of the smaller villages in the area. There's a huge positive flow on effect that those who oppose the mine don't talk about.

Perhaps it's because it seems like the majority of those who oppose the mine don't actually live here and arrived today on buses from Sydney and Newcastle. As a local resident, I know that this project has local support, but it feels like our voices are drowned out by a large rent-

a-crowd of professional protestors who have no idea what it is like to work and live in our community.

The Bylong Project does not propose open cuts on flood plains like the Greenies will try to make the public believe. Having worked on the exploration phase of this project, I have worked first hand on the land being proposed as open cuts, and it is not on the flood plains, and it is not the best prime ag land New South Wales has to offer either.

Even so, with all the concerns raised by environmentalists over Tarwyn Park, KEPCO have demonstrated their commitment to finding the right balance, and listened to the feedback and have since adjusted their mine plan to ensure the open cuts stay off the property.

I grew up on the land and come from a farming background so I understand the need to ensure the protection of farmland and water supply. But having worked in mining and rehabilitation of mine sites for some years now, I have seen good examples of how mining and agriculture can work together.

And I have no doubt that as both industries continue to thrive, we'll see plenty more good examples of both industries working together.

I have personally seen KEPCO's commitment to making rehabilitation work on the exploration project, as I was a key member of the team that undertook the drill site rehabilitation works. And I am very proud of the work that I did.

And I believe that the NSW Government was pretty happy with it too. They used our rehabilitated exploration sites on Tarwyn Park as good examples at a rehabilitation conference in the Hunter Valley.

Done right, KEPCO's Bylong Project will set new rehabilitation benchmarks for mining projects in New South Wales.

I urge the IPC panel to take the Department of Planning's recommendation, and approve the Bylong Coal Project.

Thank you for your time.