

My name is Ross Granata. I am the owner and operator of a multi-franchised Motor Vehicle Dealership in Mudgee. I am here to speak in favour of Bylong Coal Project.

When I commenced trading 27 years ago, I can remember my nearest Holden competitor was in nearby Kandos, 50 kilometres from Mudgee. I can also remember there was another dealership in Wellington some 90 kilometres away. Ford, Mitsubishi and Nissan were also represented in Wellington.

I can remember Holden dealerships were located at Warren, Peak Hill, Canowindra, Dungog, Gloucester and many more country towns. Today, none of these dealerships exist. In fact, when I first came to Mudgee and commenced trading, there were five motor vehicle dealerships, today there are only three. Why does this happen, simple, we live in a globalized world and there is no sympathy for small scale operators.

By any measure, I have a progressive and robust business given the relatively small market that is Mudgee, a town with a population of 10,000 people.

Last week, my total wage bill was \$57,666.42 (gross) employing 41 people. I expect to pay over \$3 million in wages in the coming twelve months.

Why has my business grown while other similar businesses in similar sized country towns vanished? There is one simple reason and that is coal. If not for coal mining, Mudgee and its economy would be doomed. I and the other two dealerships in Mudgee would not survive if not for coal because our other industries such as agriculture, viticulture or tourism do not generate sufficient wealth or job to sustain the three new motor vehicle dealerships in a market the size of Mudgee.

Mudgee with a population of 10,000 people does not have sufficient infrastructure or critical mass to guarantee its future in terms of population, employment, governance and financial independence without coal.

Whether you are in favour of mining or not, the economic reality is that Mudgee and this district are heavily reliant on mining for employment, service facilities and our prosperity today and beyond.

Do I have a direct interest in the Bylong Valley Project?

Am I a shareholder? NO.

Am I guaranteed to sell the Bylong Valley Project new motor vehicle? NO.

Like most mining companies, they have a propensity to purchase a brand that I do not sell or represent.

My future and the future of my 41 employees will be enhanced by the employment the Bylong Valley Project will generate.

To deny the Bylong Valley Project is to deny our economic future.