

Good afternoon. My name is Greg Blais. As a small business owner and director in the Singleton area, I support the Rix's creek expansion.

I have worked for over 25 Years in industry which supports coal mining.

Today I represent two companies, Ace Tyres Singleton for which I am a one of the owners and Valley Tyres where I am the general Manager. Valley Tyres is also a co-owner in Ace Tyres Singleton.

Next year we will celebrate 50 years of servicing the Bloomfield group. In our group of tyre companies we now have over 45 employees. Both companies will rely on the Rix's creek expansion to contribute to the ongoing viability of the businesses. We have a wide range of very loyal long-term employees within our tyre group but also we also have many ongoing apprenticeships with a strong focus on training youth employees.

Ace Tyres Singleton supplies and services the Rix's Creek road vehicles and also many of the staff's personal vehicles.

Valley Tyres supplies and services the open cut operations and also the Bloomfield workshops which provide maintenance to the Rix's Creek mine.

All our company's employees have adhered to the strict Work Health and safety policies of the Bloomfield group. Over the past 50 years neither Denis Wilton nor I have seen any health issues reported from our staff working within the coal mines we contract to. Denis Wilton himself has also worked changing tyres in Bloomfield's open cut mine and started in 1970. Now almost 80 years old Denis has never had any health related issues from working within the coal mine. As a contractor to the Bloomfield group we can state that safety and environmental policies are strongly implemented and enforced. The mine has always presented a safe working environment for all our staff and continued to work closely with our companies to ensure that the Work Health and Safety policies are implemented and up to date.

From a financial point of view working within the coal industry has allowed our small businesses to thrive over the years. This year we will even invest in over \$75000 into solar power for our main buildings. It may seem ironic but the coal industry has therefore enabled us to be a greener company. Without Australia's coal and natural resources our government could not provide such generous grants for solar power and green incentives.

Our companies also support over 40 suppliers in the Singleton and Hunter Valley Area. These suppliers range from essential maintenance and transport right down to the local lunch supplier. In the Hunter Valley and especially Singleton we all need to support each other in order to survive. The support from the Rix's creek expansion will have a massive flow on effect within the local economy throughout many small businesses. Everything is interrelated and it could be said that the same dollar made from mine support moves around many times within the community. I can't stress enough how the flow-on effect benefits small business right down the line.

Singleton needs this expansion and the Hunter also needs it.

Thanks for your time today and I urge all of you to support this expansion for Singleton and the Hunter's future.