

Securing Mt Piper's future fact sheet



The Mt Piper power station near Lithgow is one of New South Wales' newest and most efficient coal-fired plants. It has already earned a reputation for supplying customers across the state with reliable, affordable electricity.

This fact sheet describes the pivotal role Mt Piper plays in the national energy market, why certainty of coal supply for the plant is important and how the Pipers Flat rail coal unloader project can help secure the power station's long-term future.

History

The Mt Piper power station was commissioned in stages over 1992 and 1993. Today the plant is owned by EnergyAustralia and comprises two 700-megawatt (MW) coal-fired steam turbines. At full capacity these units can generate enough energy to meet the needs of some 1.2 million homes in New South Wales every year.

The plant is critical to maintaining reliable, affordable electricity supply, particularly at times of peak demand. It provides stability as we integrate intermittent sources of power like wind and solar into a modern energy system.

Mt Piper is also a part of the local community, providing direct and in-direct employment for around 300 people.

Today, the power station gets most its coal from the nearby Springvale mine. Previously there were six local mines capable of supplying Mt Piper.

Mt Piper facts

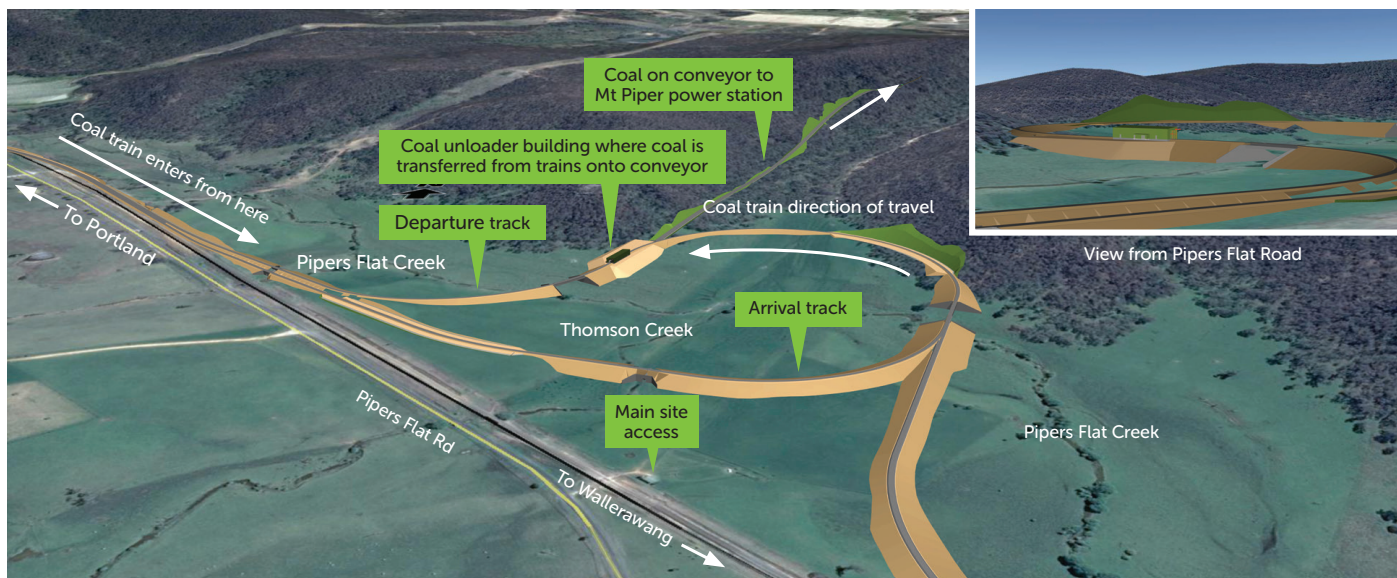
- Supplies up to 15 per cent of New South Wales' electricity demand
- Provides around 189 permanent local jobs
- Employs 15 apprentices and 1 Traineeship from Lithgow TAFE
- Injects around \$40 million into the local economy each year
- Operational life to 2042

Now there's just one – Springvale – and it's scheduled to close in 2024. On the other hand, the power station has an operating life to 2042.

Sourcing coal from the Lithgow region is EnergyAustralia's preferred option.

Our approach to securing Mt Piper's future involves providing a secure, diverse and cost-competitive of coal for the duration of its remaining operational life to 2042. This involves exploring long-term options to transport coal from other regions in NSW.

In the short term, we plan to transport small volumes of coal to supplement current supply from Springvale.



Rail unloader project

In 2009 a project to build and operate infrastructure to unload coal from trains at Pipers Flat, located between Wallerawang and Portland, received approval from the New South Wales Department of Planning and Environment.

The project, which received approval from the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in 2009, involves the construction and operation of:

- a rail loop which connects to the main line
- a coal unloader building located on the loop
- a conveyor system which carries coal from the unloader building to the power station

EnergyAustralia submitted a modification application to the Department of Planning and Environment in August 2018. The modification was approved in January 2019. The application included a revised design to improve efficiency and reduce the environmental impacts of the development, as well as a request to extend to the required start date of the approval permit.

The design changes mean:

- Reducing the height of the rail embankment by around four metres to better protect the surrounding area from noise
- Lowering the height of the coal unloader building by around one metre
- Removing the transfer tower so that coal can be conveyed directly to the power station, making the operation more efficient
- Removing the fuelling station, rail wagon maintenance and diesel storage areas so there's less impact to visual amenity

- Better alignment to land contours to reduce the amount of fill material required. For six months of construction this will add less than half a per cent to the region's heavy traffic volume.

Next steps

Projects of this kind are better when the community is informed and can have a say. That means there's an obligation on EnergyAustralia to consult and listen to what people say, so any project we do is good for the environment and the community.

We're keeping Lithgow City Council and members of our Community Consultative Committee up-to-date. At important stages of the project we'll also ask local people and other stakeholders for their views and feedback.

If it goes ahead, the project would create around 130 jobs during the two years of construction. EnergyAustralia hopes to make a final investment decision in 2021 with the aim of receiving coal from other mines in New South Wales from 2022.

Get in touch

If you'd like to know more please contact us at contactus@energyaustralia.com.au or (02) 6354 8111.

Information about the project is also available at energyaustralia.com.au/mtpiperprojects