

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 250 people.

Today, the power station gets 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' energy demand
- Provides around 175 permanent local jobs
- Employs 11 apprentices 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. But with the future of local coal supply uncertain, we're looking at alternatives.

Our approach to securing Mt Piper's future involves transporting coal to the plant via rail from other mines in New South Wales. The ability to blend coal from different mines will also help with Mt Piper's operational reliability.

In the short term, we plan to transport up to two-to-three trains of coal each week to supplement current supply from Springvale.

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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 design includes a rail loop connected to the main rail line, a building to receive and unload the coal from wagons and a conveyor system to transport coal to the power station.

We've recently made some changes to improve the design, so the logistics and operations work better and we reduce impacts on the environment during construction.

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 be able to receive coal from other mines in New South Wales by 2022.

Get in touch

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

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



EnergyAustralia

LIGHT THE WAY

31 July 2018

[address]

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Pipers Flat Rail Coal Unloader Project

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I'm writing to inform you of EnergyAustralia's intention to submit a modification application for the Pipers Flat rail coal unloader project.

The project involves the construction and operation of a rail coal unloader facility at Pipers Flat which will enable us to source coal from other regions and transport it by train to Mt Piper power station. This will ensure we can continue to operate Mt Piper, even if there is an interruption to local coal supply.

EnergyAustralia has reviewed the original project plans, which were approved by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment in 2009, and is now proposing some changes to improve the design of the facility and reduce the environmental impacts of the development. Our application will include a request to extend the expiration date of our permit. Please refer to the fact sheet attached for further details about the project and our proposed changes.

As a local resident or business, we would like to meet with you to tell you more about our plans, answer any questions you may have and listen to your feedback. We will endeavour to contact you by phone over the next week to arrange a meeting. Alternatively, you can contact us at your convenience or visit our website for more information.

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Web: energy-generation/mt-piper-projects

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Murphy
Head of Mt Piper