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GUNNEDAH HAS INPUT INTO NSW COAL AND GAS STRATEGY

Gunnedah residents, industry representatives and other stakeholders are being invited to have their say on the NSW Government’s plans to prepare a NSW Coal and Gas Strategy.

Minister for Planning, Tony Kelly, and Member for Tamworth, Peter Draper, will address a community and stakeholder forum to be held tomorrow at Gunnedah Town Hall from 10am to 12.30pm and is the first in a series in coal regions throughout the State.

“This public consultation coincides with the release of a scoping paper about the preparation of a NSW Coal and Gas Strategy, which is on exhibition for 10 weeks until 15 April and is available on the Department of Planning’s website,” the Minister said.

“Given the scale of the industry and its expected growth, it’s important we seek public feedback on how to take a more strategic and holistic view of coal mining.

“The NSW Government hopes to develop a range of initiatives to provide greater certainty for stakeholders, communities, the mining industry and the environment.

“Community and stakeholder input will help us identify the local issues in regards to coal and gas mining, and is a key step which will guide the preparation of the NSW Coal and Gas Strategy.”

Mr Kelly said preliminary assessments indicated most of the growth in the coal and coal seam gas industries over the next 25 years would occur in the north of the State.

“The coal industry will play a significant role in the Hunter Valley, the northern part of the Western Basin and the Gunnedah Basin in the coming years,” the Minister said.

“The geology of the Gunnedah Basin is such that future coal mining will not occur over the whole basin, but will be restricted to areas where the coal is located.

“While this growth will represent an increase compared to current coal production rates, coal mining is expected to remain a relatively minor land use within the broader Gunnedah Basin.”

Preparation of the Coal and Gas Strategy will be led by the Department of Planning, with assistance from all key government agencies including Treasury, NSW Health, the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water (DECCW), Industry and Investment NSW and Transport NSW.

A stakeholder reference group has also been established to assist in developing the strategy.

People wanting to attend the forum are required to register in advance at www.planning.nsw.gov.au/forums or phone 1300 305 695.