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**Bengalla Mine expansion supports up to 900 jobs**

A proposal that has the potential to create up to 500 new jobs and support 400 existing jobs by extending the life of Bengalla Coal Mine has been approved, with strict conditions to control dust, noise, environmental and heritage impacts.

“An expanded Bengalla Coal Mine has the potential to employ 900 mine workers, plus up to 315 more during construction,” a Department of Planning and Environment spokesperson said.

“The local economy will benefit as more money from the expanded mine flows into the cash registers of local businesses.

“That’s potentially up to 900 pay packets being spent in all kinds of local shops, from cafés and newsagents, to grocers and hardware stores and everything in between.

“The mine will generate around $778 million in royalties for NSW, helping to pay for the schools, hospitals and roads we need.

“The company will also give Muswellbrook Council more than $500,000 a year to pay for community services and local road upgrades.”

The extra years of productivity are possible due to the Department of Planning and Environment approval, which allows mining to continue for another 24 years at the site, which was due to stop operating in June 2017.

The Department’s decision follows an independent review conducted by the Planning Assessment Commission (PAC).

This review found that the project could be approved, subject to resolving a number of outstanding conditions about private properties that will be affected by the mine.

The Department’s approval has incorporated the PAC’s recommendations.

“The mine must also conserve up to 6,215 hectares of ecological land to make up for the 881 hectares that must be cleared for the expansion to go ahead,” the spokesperson said.

“Where the predicted impacts are significant, 16 local landowners will be able to ask the mine to purchase their property, including appropriate compensation for disturbance.”

The spokesperson said the approval also includes conditions around upgrading and maintaining local roads and protecting Aboriginal heritage to ensure impacts from the mine are minimised.

“The Department of Planning and Environment is expanding its compliance team so we have more people on the ground working with mines and the community, as well as conducting
spot checks and unannounced surveillance of mines, to make sure they are following the rules.”

To view the Department of Planning and Environment’s assessment of the proposal, visit the Major Projects website at www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au.

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