



Liddell Update

25 May 2023



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Last days of Liddell

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Budding blacksmiths learn the trade

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After spinning at 3,000 revolutions per minute for the past 52 years, the turbines at Liddell Power Station are now still.

It's a strange feeling for everyone at site not hearing the constant hum, but after a wonderful few days honouring all the people who have worked at Liddell and honouring the contributions the station made to our community, the adjustment to life after Liddell is underway.

The decommissioning team is now at work, and you can read more about their approach to the considerable task ahead of them on page 4.

In another major milestone, the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for our State Significant Development Application to set the Liddell site up for future use is now on public display.

The EIS will be on exhibition until 31 May and further information, including the full EIS, can be found [here](#).

It's also full steam ahead on rehabilitation work for the Liddell Ash Dam, with an update on progress is available on page 7.

Importantly, this period of change we've kept our focus firmly on the next generation, ensuring that youth across the community are aware of the career opportunities available to them in our industry. Read more page 7.

Our Liddell Works partnership with Arts Upper Hunter is also enjoying great momentum. You can read about the masterpieces created by some of our people using items salvaged from Liddell during a blacksmith workshop held recently on page 8.

Amidst all this action, it's the reflections from Steve Lanesbury - one of our longest serving employees - about the closure and reunion events that I think you'll most enjoy. He has a unique way of capturing the sentiment of the moment and I hope you enjoy his story on page 6.

It has been a particularly busy and intense period for everyone involved but I think we managed to give 'Lady Liddell' the send-off she deserved. Above all, I'm glad these closure events have given us an opportunity to celebrate the people of Liddell because they have always been our greatest strength and their ongoing connections will be our greatest legacy.

Thank you and farewell Liddell.



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A selection of photos from Liddell's closure and Reunion Day. Share yours in the [Liddell Celebrations Facebook group](#) today!



Decommissioning underway

The next chapter for Liddell Power Station is officially underway with the Decommissioning Team hard at work since Monday 8 May.

Boasting more than 500 years of experience in our industry between them, the 25 strong team is made up of some of the best Operators and Maintainers from Liddell as well as valued contract partners, and they'll spend more than 25,000 hours between now and the end of the year making Liddell 'cold, dark and dry,' ready for safe demolition.

The decommissioning phase also sees responsibility for the site transfer from AGL Macquarie General Manager Len McLachlan to AGL Program Director Site Transition Brad Williams.

Decommissioning Leader Lincoln Mills says respecting the standards set by all those who have worked at Liddell over the years is a priority for the team.

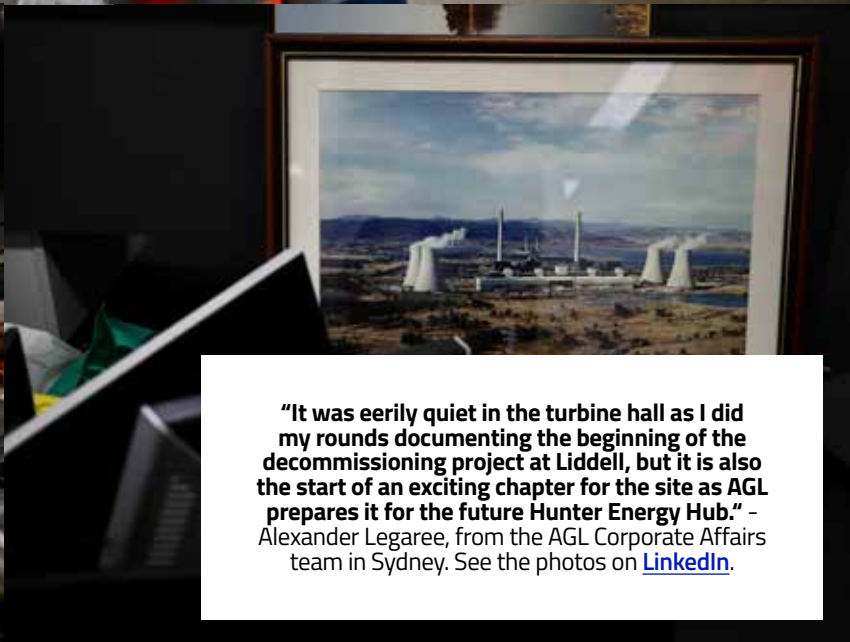
"Liddell has had 52 years of teams working together, and as the last operational team on site we want to honour all those that have made the place what it is; our goal is to decommission the power station with the same care and skill that went into operating and maintaining it over the years," Lincoln said.

"The work does require a shift of thinking because it's different to a major outage – we're not putting it back to work at the end. The planning that we've done, and the experience of our team gives us confidence that we'll achieve our decommissioning objective to safely hand over the site for demolition.

"We've received great support from the AGL Macquarie team during the planning phase and will continue to call upon specialist skills and resources from Bayswater as we move into the decommissioning execution phase."

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"It was eerily quiet in the turbine hall as I did my rounds documenting the beginning of the decommissioning project at Liddell, but it is also the start of an exciting chapter for the site as AGL prepares it for the future Hunter Energy Hub." - Alexander Legaree, from the AGL Corporate Affairs team in Sydney. See the photos on [LinkedIn](#).



Last days of Liddell

Shift Manager Steve Lanesbury was front and centre for much of the action around the closure of Liddell Power Station. For weeks he led tours of the station for former employees and he generously shared stories of his time at Liddell in the media and at community events. Then on the final day, he was joined by his colleague of 44 years Barry Moffitt, to oversee the final Liddell unit retirement.

It was an intense period, and the emotions were heavy. Now, several weeks on he's shared some reflections on the experience of Liddell's last week – beginning with comments on the shutdown of Unit Two on the Wednesday night.

After hanging on for hours longer than expected, it became evident that the unit just wasn't going to quit and required action. Steve was joined by Dallas Cunneen, another long serving employee of 49 years, to activate the governor trip plunger – a physical trip switch at the generator end of the unit.

"When we walked out to the Turbine Hall, we realized the enormity of what we were doing. As we went past the loading bay, I noticed that our footsteps slowed instinctively, just like walking into a funeral.

"When it came to shutting down the last unit on Friday it wasn't as bad – the emotion was out of it, and I just had a job to do.

"But then it kept going on longer than we expected and in the end, we had to push the button, which was a bit sad. Generally, they trip out before then and she just didn't want to go."

With the media capturing every move and AGL Executives standing at his shoulder, it was a tough decision to make.

"There was some sort of awareness that everyone was there – I'd been told to try not to swear – but we had a job to do, and our concentration went there. I did say to Barry 'if you start crying, I'm going to punch you' because I knew if someone started, we'd all follow.

"To do that shutdown with Baz was a really good tribute to the end of our career. We've worked together for 44 years – we've been to birthdays, weddings, and funerals together, we're like family."

With the last unit finally out of service, things became a bit of a whirlwind for Steve. More than 800 people at the reunion event on Saturday, guests flying in from overseas and interstate, and according to his wife and daughter who joined him for the occasion, he must've spoken to nearly every one of them.

"The Saturday was absolutely brilliant, catching up with people I hadn't seen in ages and then we went to the Railway Hotel and kicked on for a while. We are like a family: we grew up together, we partied together and getting together again it was like to 25 or 30 years ago with everyone yapping. It was a very big weekend."

And now July 12 is circled on the calendar as his last day on the job. With plant still to monitor, there's a reduced roster of Operators still on shift.

"All the transition plans put in place are working – we're gradually reducing the shift numbers as people move across the road to Bayswater, but it's very surreal when you're on night shift at the moment. You hear all the noises that you've never heard before and it's a little bit spooky. I'm waiting for ghosts of times past to come around the corner and get me!"

Liddell Ash Dam update

While the Power Station itself may have just closed, the progressive rehabilitation of Liddell Ash Dam has been underway since 2019, with 70 of 390 hectares now returned to pasture and the next major phase about to start.

This phase will see an additional 130 hectares of capping completed over a 24-month period at a cost of \$20million and early work is in motion: improving road access, ash dewatering and updating management plans for dust suppression, safety, environmental and traffic management.

A key part of the early work has been the application of polymer as a suppressant that will prevent dust leaving site. This was a carefully managed process, with a highly skilled crop duster pilot flying just five metres above the ash dam to disperse the polymer.

“Starting this next phase of work is another major milestone as we work towards preparing the Liddell site for re-use and redevelopment,” said AGL Program

Director of Site Transition Brad Williams.

“This particular part of the ash dam project will employ 30-50 workers full-time for the next two years and we hope to complete all works on Liddell Ash Dam within seven years.

“Between the team working on the decommissioning of Liddell Power Station and the ongoing rehabilitation of the Ash Dam, there’s certainly no shortage of action onsite and we’re pleased to be able to provide jobs and business opportunities for the Upper Hunter community during the process.”



Bringing through the next generation

AGL’s commitment to inspiring future generations to consider a career in the energy industry continues in earnest with engineering students from Macquarie University and PhD candidates from University of Newcastle visiting site recently.

High school students from across the Hunter also gained great insights into the Circular Economy from some of our subject matter experts at a Think Tank Challenge hosted by Training Services NSW in Muswellbrook last week.

Building awareness of the different career opportunities available locally and developing skills for the future is an ongoing priority for AGL Macquarie General Manager Len McLachlan.

“Australia’s biggest opportunity for economic growth is the global shift to clean energy and it’s very clear that our region will play a key role in making that shift happen,” McLachlan said.

“Our site has a long history of working in partnership with TAFE and universities in training the future workforce and building the skills base of the region. Adapting to the shifting technology has been an ongoing part of the education process and that will continue as we move into the next phase of energy production.”

Further information about careers at AGL can be found at [agl.com.au/careers](https://www.agl.com.au/careers).



Budding blacksmiths learn the trade

Bottle openers out of boiler tubes, a fruit bowl out of an old shovel, salad servers out of offcuts and a human hand sculpture out of a big slab of flat bar are just some of the inspired creations to emerge from the Blacksmithing Workshops that form part of the Liddell Works project AGL is running in partnership with Arts Upper Hunter.

The workshops saw ten AGL employees given an opportunity to learn from Will Maguire - one of Australia's most highly regarded blacksmiths - while creating works made from materials salvaged from Liddell Power Station.

Some of the pieces have been earmarked for inclusion in the Liddell Works exhibition scheduled for mid-2024 at Muswellbrook Art Gallery and Singleton Arts and Cultural Centre.

Maguire was like a kid in a candy store when scouring Liddell for metals to use for the workshops, and for the major work he will create for the exhibition.

"It was constantly overwhelming seeing artistic opportunities everywhere and I was requesting all these random bits of stuff," Maguire said.

"It's a big, brutal, practical space and all these people were there for their work and here I was swanning around looking at things and seeing a place full of artistic potential."

While exposure to Maguire's skills and expertise was a great learning opportunity for the workshop participants it was an equally informative process for Maguire who completed an industrial blacksmith apprenticeship before becoming a fulltime artist.

"Initially sitting around in the workshop, it was like I was back at work chatting with colleagues and then all of a sudden I realized I was coming at it from another place and it was interesting to see that shift in myself - that I've moved across those worlds of making practical things and moved into more creative outcomes."

Chris Rooney, a Production Coordinator who's been heavily involved with Liddell over the years, and created the salad servers, said the participants thrived on the opportunity to learn from a master craftsman while creating a lasting reminder of their association with Liddell.

"Everybody loved it," Chris said. "I've got an interest in blacksmithing - I'm just beginning in the craft - so it was good to see Will at work. He made things look very easy! He was very practical and set an easy flow for us; first we created some set pieces (a hook and bottle opener) and then he supported us to create our own work."

"It was nice to work with bits and pieces of Liddell and transform it into a keepsake. My wife and I both have a strong connection to the site and now that it's shut down, we have a physical memory of place forever."

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Contact

If you see anyone from Liddell around town, make sure to say hello or, give us a call on 1800 039 600 or send an email to liddellinfo@agl.com.au.

