

**IMPACTS OF THE WATER AMENDMENT (RESTORING OUR RIVERS) ACT
2023 ON NSW REGIONAL COMMUNITIES**

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Inquiry in to the impacts of the Water Amendment (Restoring Our Rivers) Act 2023 on NSW Regional Communities.

My submission refers to the possible impacts of contaminated water from a NSW State Significant Development known as SVL Bowdens near Lue.

The Bowdens project proposes to construct dams to capture, take and use 924 megalitres of rainfall and run off water annually from the site of the proposed Zinc, Lead and Silver mine on the upper reaches of Lawson Creek, which in turn flows in to the Cudgegong and then the Macquarie River system.

The Excluded Works Exemption would mean the entire capture of rainfall and runoff from the Bowdens site would be unlicensed. This capture would directly impact on the flow of Lawson Creek and consequently, all landholders and users downstream of the proposed project. Lawson Creek has exhibited severely reduced and nil surface flows during recent severe droughts and dry spells. Intercepting 924 megalitres will severely impact the flow in “normal” times and will be impossible during droughts.

The waste produced from this proposed project will include toxic substances such as arsenic, which will be used in onsite processing. It should be noted that the Tailings Storage Facility includes a spillway and the TSF would be located just a few hundred metres from Lawson Creek. The 924 megalitres per annum of contaminated water collected cannot be released from the site. Heavy rainfall events such as the one which occurred in 2022 will make it impossible to prevent a loss of contaminated water from the site. It should also be noted that Lawson Creek and thence the Cudgegong River provides the entire supply of domestic water for Gulgong.

I urge the committee to investigate the cumulative impacts of the unlicensed capture of contaminated water at State Significant projects such as that at Bowdens Lue on the Murray Darling Plan.

Further, that the very possible escape of contaminated water from the Bowdens site during heavy rainfall events would impact on the safety of drinking water supplies in towns such as Gulgong.





