

MAD AS MUDGE

With acknowledgement to Willian Blake

Mudgee is a regional town about 4 hours drive over the mountains west of Sydney, Australia.

If you visit you will have the opportunity to enter a time machine which will take you forward through the years to see how our pretty valley along the Cudgegong River changes through the years.

2023

The trip will start in the present time. You will delight in views of the hills, woodlands and small villages of this green and pleasant land. Vineyards, olive groves, horse studs, sheep and cattle farms, extend from the mountains to the east and the plains to the west. To the north are the major coal mines of Ulan and Wilpinjong which bring much prosperity to the district through employment, training and infrastructure. You will observe the steady flow of people from Sydney and beyond, visiting the wineries, restaurants, homestays and village pubs.

2025

As the time machine takes you through the years the first change that you will see is an enormous open cut lead and silver mine east of Mudgee. In the early years, the mine is in the development phase. There is significant activity with the removal of topsoil for the three open cut holes in the ground and the construction of the single tailings dam. Young men and women are employed on high wages, little aware of what awaits them and their families in the future.

In the years 2025 and 2027 N.S.W. State government approves more lead mines throughout NSW particularly to the west of Sydney and down the coast to Wollongong.

2033

10 years on and the has scene has changed. The lead mine has no water. Two major droughts and dust storms in 2029 and 2032 spread lead dust through the district decimating agricultural production and tourist-based industries. Children in contact with lead dust now have lower cognitive skills and slower brain development. Their brains will be impaired for life. Mine workers have reduced semen counts. Unborn children are compromised before they are even born. Farm animals have been quarantined by The NSW Dept Primary Industry and are unable to be either moved or slaughtered for meat. The same applies to the super fine wool which since WW 2 has been sort by the wool mills of Italy and Japan. No longer the green and clean image for which Australian agriculture had been famous. The lead uptake in the olive groves is complete and permanent. Likewise, the vineyards, the first of which were established soon after the early settlers crossed the Blue Mountains. Prevailing winds have carried the lead dust to the famous wineries of the Hunter Valley to the east.

This district and others west of Sydney have joined the remote lead mining towns of Western NSW, Queensland, South Australia, India, USA and China. The health and fertility of all animals including humans has been severely compromised. The saying “MAD AS MUDGE” is common throughout the country.

Trucks with lead and silver based ore trundle down the narrow road to Mudgee, on westward to Broken Hill and then the long trip to Port Pirie in South Australia. In 2031 there were two major accidents in which the ore containing lead was spilled into the environment. One crash was in Mudgee outside the only surviving hotel and 100 yards from the primary school. This incident was ignored by the local council. The EPA requested reports from the truck owners and cautioned the drivers.

Human and animal blood lead testing is discouraged by the NSW Dept Health. However, by 2034, the cover up is no longer accepted and as the information spreads, families start to leave Mudgee in numbers. In 2034 real Estate Values plunge and you will see as you travel further into the future that the whole town resembles the outer suburbs of Broken Hill and Mount Isa. Tourism is a thing of the past. The last of the medical doctors and veterinarians who warned against lead poisoning years ago, have left with their children and families.

Employment opportunities, which were promised by the mining company in support of the mine approval back in 2023, fall away to virtually none, as artificial intelligence guides driverless trucks and vehicles from an office in the city.

2040

A major flood equal to the 2022 disaster has completely swamped the single Bowdens tailings dam, flooding farms and homes along the Lawson Creek and Cudgegong river with toxic lead concentrate. The town of Mudgee is, for a fifth time, surrounded by toxic waste which eventually drains out

to the Macquarie River and on into the Macquarie Marshes and the Darling river. Four major horses studs and three Angus cattle studs are quarantined for an indefinite time.

The flocks of parrots, cockatoos and other birds that you observed back in 2023 are attracted to the sweet taste of lead in the single tailing dam overflow into the waterways. Likewise with the insects which previously played such an important role in the ecology of the area. The bees that previously had produced the famous Mudgee honey and pollinated crops, trees and wild flowers are also poisoned. The poisoned bees mature with smaller heads, lose their memory and cannot find the way home to their hives.

2045

The IT industries no longer need silver and the danger of lead poisoning is universally accepted throughout the world. Silver and lead prices have returned to pre 2018 levels and lead mining companies are in liquidation. The new company chairman, Mustafa el Habreem, speaking from his yacht in the Bosphorus, denies any responsibility for reclamation of the dark satanic holes near Mudgee in faraway Australia. *So much for conditions placed on the licence way back in 2023.*

The mess and pollution surrounding the open cut pits remain. There is now no water at the mine site. Lead dust is carried by the prevailing winds to Sydney during the worst drought in

recorded history. The dust that is found in the playing fields and kindergartens of Sydney suburbs is high in lead.

The Teals and Greens are in power in NSW, largely due to the scandals of poisoned children throughout the regions. The federal environment minister blames the previous government but is forced to resign amongst threatened class actions by lawyers representing the now maturing youths with proven brain damage and fertility issues.

The scandal of lead pollution has spread throughout the world with Sydney no longer a favoured destination for overseas visitors. United Nations testing of lead dust falling on Sydney during the drought have confirmed what the EPA had been denying since 2023. Sydney hotels are generally only half full. Families in Newcastle north of Sydney are warned to not allow their children to play in the dirt.

Class actions fill the courts.

In a future trip in the time machine we travel back in time to the early 2020s. We will look at the government planning departments who were subjected to intense lobbying to approve this and other NSW lead mines.