

Submission  
No 22

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF  
GOLD, SILVER, LEAD AND ZINC MINING ON HUMAN  
HEALTH, LAND, AIR AND WATER QUALITY IN NEW  
SOUTH WALES**

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

The Bowdens Silver Mine and metals mining more broadly in NSW and beyond poses alarming risks to human health, Indigenous Heritage, water & air quality, land & soil and the livelihoods of local farmers and growers.

There are past and existing cases of metals mining in NSW and all over the world which prove this, (Cadia). Decommissioned mines continue to pollute waterways (the Turon River) for decades and even centuries after mining ceases. Recently El Salvador has outlawed metals mining because of the horrific impacts on their environment and waterways, leading to a clean water shortage. We need to learn from these cases and move forward with caution. Remediation costs are unfathomable. Some things cannot be undone such as acid mine drainage and we, as a nation need to protect the rights of future generations to live in a safe and clean environment. It is also unfair to use tax payer dollars to remediate abandoned mine sites when government policies (or lack of) allow mining companies to pillage the earth with little responsibility to clean up their mess when they're done.

Clean water and soil is the basis of health for people, animals and the environment and it is my opinion that the integrity of our water supply be protected at all costs, in a drought prone landscape.

I do see water and soil quality as the main concern here and thus I will frame my submission around this issue. It is worth mentioning that other areas that stand to be irreversibly effected by metals mining need to be examined in detail and the community consulted - Especially Indigenous Heritage, The Wiradjuri people & Agriculture sector which so far, in my view has been largely ignored, and signed off on as a tick the box exercise.

The Cudgegong River, home of the Platypus, the lifeblood of the Mid Western region. Thriving Mudgee is built on its banks, with its uncountable tourism awards and booming wine & food sector. Nearby Gulgong get's all its potable & drinking water supply from the Cudgegong. Further downstream the Cudgegong flows into the mighty Macquarie River and joins into the Murray Darling System.

Clean water is everything. We can not put more stress on our already struggling waterways. The Murray Darling System, through drought, pollution, over irrigation and poor water management has been crying out for help. We all know this. We can't ignore the fish kills, the algal blooms. Can the Murray Darling System handle more polluted water? The Murray Darling needs the clean flows from the Cudgegong and the waterways of the Central West.

Bowdens Silver proposes to build their tailings dam just above Lawson Creek, which flows into the Cudgegong. We know, from case studies all around the world, that tailings dams fail, more often than not. Bowdens have even designed a spillway on their dam in the likelihood of a flood event. You can't ask locals to stand by and watch as the beautiful Lawson creek and the clean waters of the Cudgegong are polluted by cyanide, lead and a cocktail of toxins from acid mine drainage.

It is so frustrating to watch this unfold when in our local government area MWRC has received funding for the 'Murray Darling Healthy Rivers Program', trees have been planted and the Cudgegong river has been enhanced through this initiative. What kind of mixed

message is this sending when mining proposals like Bowdens Silver are approved, their activities inevitably polluting waterways that the government has spent tax payer money on trying to improve.

The Bowdens mine is proposed as an open cut mine. How in our drought prone environment is toxic dust supposed to be suppressed? Water is already scarce in this region. Once dust is mobilised there is no telling how far it can travel. We don't need to cast our memories back very far to remember dust storms that block out the sun. Dust can even travel to different countries! Toxic dust in the sky means that toxic dust lands on our soils. If we have lead and toxic metals in our soils, how are we supposed to have a thriving agriculture industry? How are local people supposed to grow their own food and feed their families?

There is so much at stake here. Digging up NSW in hunger of metals is an apocalyptic vision for local people. When the only argument for having these mines is employment and a supposed boost to the economy, this is not an equal trade off when the toxic legacy will last forever. Our tourism and agriculture industry provides more sustainable jobs for people and we need to invest in that!

As someone who's family has lived in the MWRC region for several generations, this is my home. The prospect of raising a family where there's a real risk of having your children poisoned by lead exposure is terrifying. It's worth mentioning that the stress on our community trying to fight this is seriously alarming. What about our mental health?

As a final point I'd like to bring your attention to the critically endangered ecological community, box gum grassy woodlands. A significant patch of BGGW would need to be cleared for the Bowdens mine to go ahead. Stunning pristine hillsides of unique flora and fauna would be impacted by water misuse, pollution and lead dust. Koala's live in the Lue area, what about protecting their habitat and health?

I thank the parliament for their inquiry and hope that the outcome is favourable to those trying to live free of fear of toxic byproducts contaminating their drinking water, health and soils. And for the generations yet to come who will inherit the effects of the decisions we make today.