

**Submission
No 32**

**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**

Organisation: K2W Link Incorporated

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Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the "current and potential impacts of gold, silver, lead and zinc mining on human health, land, air and water quality in New South Wales"

Based on findings set out in the submission of the Mudgee Region Action Group to this Commission the public cannot trust heavy metal mining to contain the risk of surface and ground water pollution resulting from heavy metal mining.

Such damage is not ephemeral - even if mining has a limited time horizon. It takes a single adverse event to destabilise and degrade hydrological environment for downstream biological assemblages.

Populations in marshes, pools caves and streams have adapted to local environments over long periods; as the MRAG submission makes clear these biotopes support species with highly specific ranges. The remote and broken country where economic mineral extraction often focuses, coincides with biological refuges, forming centres of biodiversity. They naturally deserve protection under the EPBIC Act accordingly.

K2W has set out arguments against the expansion of open-cut heavy metal mining upstream from the Copperhunyah Reserve and in the vicinity of Trunkey Creek village, based on our long-term environmental monitoring of the affected zone, and another large open-cut silver mine proposed in the Abercrombie catchment.

None of these developments is compatible with private and public landholders' and land management agencies' biodiversity conservation efforts over the last decade, a fortiori with the long term health of the landscape and its human and non-human occupants.

The Cadia mine - a large scale open-cut gold mine in this region - has not a good record in containing pollution risk, despite years of operation, during which time it might be expected that safe methods would have evolved.

The gaps exposed through the MRAG review of Bowden's Silver EIS, suggest that commitment to environmental assurances by miners is superficial. Opening such a mine is at the expense of pre-existing natural ecosystems, and heavy metal mining takes this obvious hazard to a new level because of the danger from metallic intrusion into surface and groundwater, and the process of concentration of metals in organisms along the length of food chains.

About K2W Link

K2W Link is concerned with cross-tenural conservation in the Abercrombie River Valley from its junction with the Lachlan River to its sources in the Kanangra-Boyd World Heritage Park, with some overlap to the eastern watershed.

It funds ecological monitoring in public reserves; supporting cross agency cooperation on the control of feral intrusions; cooperation with Federal, State (LSS) and local governments in educating the public and schools on linkage conservation - allowing the free movement of endemic native species through the landscape in response to environmental shifts, caused naturally (by changes in climate, water cycles) or by human agency (historical clearing practices, degradation of water and air quality, vehicular intrusion and urbanisation, agricultural practices).

Stephen Horn

Kanangra to Wyangala Link

30 August 2023