

Submission
No 36

**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: Dubbo Environment Group Inc.

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Dubbo Environment Group Inc

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The Director Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Submission - Parliamentary Inquiry Current and potential impacts of gold, silver, lead and zinc mining on human health, land, air and water quality in New South Wales

Dubbo Environment Group Inc. is a group of 15 members and some 700 social media followers who advocate for the protection, improvement and enhancement of our precious environmental resources. Our achievements include helping to exclude public Dubbo floodplain from development by a private company, conservation within Wongarboon Tank Reserve (a local village); submissions regarding coal seam gas and mining in the Central West; local council submissions to preserve trees and increase canopy, adopt net zero emissions targets and provide more green space in new subdivisions; and the implementation of a successful CW Indian Myna control program.

DEG is a member of CW Environment Council and is well-educated in issues emanating from poor mining practices in the area.

DEG is aware that mining practices within the CW have been extremely poor in both the monitoring carried out, the implementation of required regulations, and the enforcement of these regulations by assessors.

Cadia air pollution breaches were not recognised until a community campaign was launched and gained a high media profile. Why is it that state regulators have betrayed the trust of the community?

Water availability is a concern during droughts especially when more droughts are predicted and local towns will experience water shortages. It is also a concern for dust control which is already causing stress locally, polluting fresh water tank supplies and causing health problems for residents nearby.

DEG is aware that tailings dams for Cadia mine has resulted in failures in the past. We are highly concerned for the possible contamination by heavy metals

into nearby waterways. Bowden's tailings dam has approval to seep 1.6 ML per day of contaminated water into Lawson Creek. Why is this? It is not acceptable.

Our Recommendations are:

- The Department of Planning and the Independent Planning Commission must be resourced to employ independent experts to review information provided by proponents.
- The Environment Protection Agency and Department of Health must play a major role in the approvals process and be better resourced to improve regulation.
- Greater penalties and stronger conditions for mining operations must be in place to prevent heavy metal contamination of the environment and community
- Coal mining also emits heavy metals into the air and waterways. This Inquiry should be extended to include consideration of coal mining pollution.

Yours Faithfully,

Margaret McDonald (President, Dubbo Environment Group Inc.)