

Submission
No 49

**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

There is now clear evidence that the offsite impacts of heavy metal mining on public health have been greatly under-estimated in mining approvals across the central west of New South Wales.

Whilst common practice in the mining industry for applicants to undertake their own environmental impact assessments, there is an inherent conflict in such "self-regulation". Studies paid for by the applicant themselves, presented as fact, Cannot be relied upon to protect the public health.

I asked I hold this concern for all of New South Wales, my submission here is particularly focused upon the Bowdens Silvermine approval recently granted in the town of Lue.

Lue is prime agricultural land, situated between the towns of Mudgee and Rylstone/Kandos. The brazen claim contains with in the environmental impact assessment lead to the approval of that mining development, that offsite impacts to resident health will be minimised, when hundreds of thousands of tons of lead ore will be extracted through open cut blasting is preposterous.

The community, via the Mudgee Region Action Group, sought its own expert opinion on these matters and found the EIS assessment was in accurate and in adequate on these issues. This evidence appears to have been ignored by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment and the independent planning commission (IPC).

<https://www.lueactiongroup.org/lead>

Furthermore, inaccuracies and winds, projections, and other potential sources of light contamination appear to greatly understate both the amount and reach of potential laid contamination. No restrictions appear to have been placed on the applicant, with respect to glassed plans, leaving open the possibility of blasting during wind events that would carry lead contamination to surrounding towns of Mudgee and Rylstone.

The prevailing wind direction in the region is a westerly, meaning that lead contamination would be pushed most often in the direction of the town water supply for Rylstone.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines for the management of lead exposure state there is "no known safe level of lead in the human body."

The fact that local residents have been offered blood tests as a means of monitoring, local exposure is incredulous. Of course, by the time the raised blood levels of lead have been detected, it is already too late. Lead poisoning is irreversible and incredibly damaging on an individual's health.

My wife's family have worked the land in this region for over 100 years. Many of them live within mere kilometres of the Minesite. I fear for their health, along with that of my children who travel to the region regularly is this mine is to go ahead.

It also appears that there are no conditions for capital to be set-aside to remediate any large-scale public health impacts if they were to occur.

These injustices within our system must be addressed and we welcome this Parliamentary Inquiry that will hopefully serve to restore the balance between mining development and public health.

Recent experiences of those communities living adjacent to the Cadia Mine demonstrate that offsite impacts to public health from heavy metal mining are much more difficult to contain than Bowden's modelling would suggest. The ineffectiveness of the "controls" placed upon mining operations to influence actions of commercial mining operations, is also demonstrated in Newcrest's apathy in this situation.

Until we learn from these mistakes, history, is doomed to repeat itself.