

**Submission
No 53**

**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**

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I have lived in the area for the last 43 years with my wife and family and I have major concerns surrounding the possible Zinc/Lead/Silver mine at Lue.

The longer we look into the details of this mine the more we find out how disastrous it will be for the Lue district and the community, both for those living close to the mine and others living further downstream.

Having attended the IPC hearing in Mudgee I feel that there are some major issues that have not been addressed by the proponent.

A primary concern is catchments and waterways. The proponent has modelled their available water using flawed data from another catchment ie the Cudgegong River. As a local, I know that the Lawson Creek can have increased flow very quickly, often blocking the road but is also reduces very quickly back to a small base flow and most summers there is a very much reduced flow as it travels through the cobbled bed of the creek. The modelling assumes an average flow of 2.6 mgs per day. Recent installation of a temporary gauging station has shown a flow of 0.14mgs/day which is a fraction of what they have estimated or need. Also, this current flow is on the back of two very wet years. The proponent is just being hopeful that they will have enough water to reduce dust for the project or to allow for the correct compaction of materials on site.

Apart from the obvious water deficit that won't be available for dust suppression the proponent has also not considered the issue of too much water. There have been cases of over 200mm falling in a 24hour period occurring in the last 20 years. They have not taken this into account and have not prepared for these rainfall events leaving the tailings dam vulnerable to being breached and polluting the Lawson Creek. The failing of this tailings dam will see major contaminants travelling downstream to Mudgee. This will be catastrophic for the downstream water users, not to mention the eventual drying out of the tailings dam allowing for dust to be released as was shown in the failing of the tailings dam wall at Cadia mine. They did at least have a second wall as a backup, this is not going to happen at Lue.

The mine that is only going to be 2 km from the village of Lue will spell the demise of Lue. House values will crash, assuming they are saleable at all. The school must close. It is not possible to have children so close to a major source of dust and airborne contaminants. Those left in the village will surely have to test water tanks and their blood for lead levels to ensure their ongoing health. Moving away would seem more attractive than risking health issues.

There are currently many existing businesses close to the mine, from bed and breakfasts, olive groves, motorcycle track, all relying on the inherent beauty of the area. Tourism has gone from strength to strength in the district and you don't need to be a mathematician to know that the value of this industry in time will be far greater than a couple of hundred jobs over a couple of decades. These two industries are not compatible. They cannot coexist in such close proximity, one will have to move on.

Agriculture will also suffer. Grazing or irrigation downstream cannot exist without water, or with contaminated products. Many of these properties are generational, but there are also a lot of new farmers that have moved to the area seeking a more tranquil lifestyle than the city, or even Mudgee. They bring enthusiasm to the community and new ideas. They did not expect to be living next to a mine with a plume of lead dust threatening their well being.

So when this mine finishes it's working life we will be left with:

- A toxic rock emplacement that in no way will look like a natural hill given it will not be allowed to revegetation in case it breaches the waterproof membrane.
- A tailings dam that is guaranteed to leak, in fact it is designed to leak and it will be inevitable that it will eventually fail given that maintenance will not continue into perpetuity, just for the next few decades.
- A toxic pit that filled with water that will be devoid of life, in fact it will be a genetic sump. Any unfortunate bird that land in this water will not do that again, according the one of the employees at the mine!!
- A destroyed community. If this mine goes ahead, Lue will go the same way as Ulan, Wollar and Bylong. It will mean the end of Lue. The end to the nearby agricultural industries. The end of tourism in the Lawson Creek Valley.

Is that worth 16.5 years of jobs?