

Submission
No 66

**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
Date Received: 4 September 2023

Partially
Confidential

I am a local resident to the Cadia Newcrest mine. I live approximately 7 km North East from the northern end of the southern Tailings dam. I am downwind from the mine in winter when the dominant South Westerly wind blows. I have grave concerns about the pollution created by the mine:

1. Cadia Newcrest have been aware of my desire to grow and produce clean food for my family and community since I first applied for a CDEP education grant in ~2017.

The recent SAGE (2023) report on the effect of pollution from the mine suggested that the Threshold Compounds Non-Carcinogens Hazard Index (HI) if I were to eat only meat and eggs from my produce and live in the area is twice to 5 times higher than the non hazardous level of one.

All eggs and meat that I consume are from my farm, as is the water, and much of fruit and vegetables (probably about 30%). I have taught other people in this area, around the mine, how to grow and consume more food from their own backyard and farm. I am aware of many other people in the district who aim to buy less and less from the supermarkets and are opting to grow their own. I have also been instrumental in developing a community garden in Spring Terrace where we grow our own fruit and vegetables to share amongst the local school community.

In teaching, talking and encouraging others to grow their own food - I speak of the health, the ecological and financial benefits this practice offers. This message is spread by academics and advocates of local food the world over. Especially notable is Dr Charles Massy's work in "The Call of the Reed Warbler" (2017) where a large part of his book (pp 375 - 488) discusses the importance of better growing/eating to heal Earth and ourselves. This can be achieved largely by eating food grown locally.

It is a basic human need and right to be able to grow, access and consume food that is grown in such a way. The mine's pollution is effecting both my crops and livestock - both of which are consumed by my family, my community and me. Is it fair that the mine can pollute to a point where I cannot eat my own homegrown produce without adding to my (and my family's) toxic load? What of bioaccumulation? Is it known how the effects of the pollution in and on my food over a period of time will effect my (and my children's) toxic load?

I have trusted the government and its agencies to keep me safe. The government and its agencies have trusted the mine to report on their pollution. There are high and unacceptable levels of pollution in the air, soil and water in this region. As a resident, I have no way of testing for pollution created from the mine.

I have requested Cadid/Newcrest Ore samples on multiple occasions at community meetings to send for testing to find out myself if the mine is responsible for the lead found in my water tank. The mine did not comply. I do not think that the pollution found in our water tank is important by itself, but instead an indicator that something is not right.

I am forced to trust that they (and the EPA) are doing the right thing and taking due diligence to keep me and my family safe. It seems that the EPA were unable to do anything unless there

was tangible evidence that the dust and pollution was leaving the site. If one cannot see insidious pollution, how can a community member report a pollution event. If the pollution is not a one off event (as needed to report to the EPA) how can the mine be held accountable for their pollution.

It is difficult to believe that the EPA - the primary environmental regulator have the necessary powers to act on a report, act on insidious pollutive activities, or give out fines that would be seen as a deterrent for creating future pollution.

It is clear to me that the mine cannot be held solely responsible for accurately measuring and reporting their pollution to the correct authorities. And if they did, does the community find out about this? And if they did, what are the consequences for their pollution?

I no longer feel safe or satisfied as a resident living near this mining enterprise. The mine is impacting on my family's life in ways that I was not expecting to be impacted.

References:

Massy, C., (2017) Call of the Reed Warbler, University of Queensland press.

Sage (2023) Cadia Valley Operations Human Health Risk Assessment, Sage Environmental Services.

I am sure I could find many more academic references to support my claims to human and ecological health - please let me know if this would help the cause!