

**Submission  
No 89**

**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:** Blayney Shire Council

**Date Received:** 11 September 2023

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## Blayney Shire Council

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11 September 2023

Portfolio Committee No. 2 – Health  
Legislative Council  
NSW Parliament  
6 Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

By email: [portfoliocommittee2@parliament.nsw.gov.au](mailto:portfoliocommittee2@parliament.nsw.gov.au)

Dear Dr Cohn MLC

### **SUBMISSION – CURRENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF GOLD, SILVER, LEAD AND ZINC MINING ON HUMAN HEALTH, LAND, AIR AND WATER QUALITY IN NSW – BLAYNEY SHIRE COUNCIL**

Blayney Shire Council proudly has a long history of productive working relationships with the mining industry in the Shire.

Council acknowledges the significant positive economic stimulus (including rating income), employment, diversity of income and local business opportunities that are associated with mining.

Blayney Shire Council is home to two significant mining operations;

- Cadia Valley Operations (Cadia) which is currently operational and currently owned by Newcrest Mining Limited, and
- McPhillamys Gold Project (approved by IPC in early 2023 not yet commenced) and currently owned by Regis Resources Limited.

While our community generally appreciates the significant economic benefits any mine brings, Council acknowledges it is the residents, that live in close proximity to any mining project who bear the greatest disruption including the potential for any impact on human health, land, air and water quality.

Council and our communities are heavily reliant on initially any consent authority (such as the Independent Planning Commission (IPC)) who consider development applications, and the NSW Department of Planning & Environment to make well informed decisions regarding any proposal or subsequent modification application.

The recent IPC experience for the McPhillamys Gold Project, for all stakeholders, including; the applicant, Council and the community was not considered a positive one.

The planning process for a mine is; extremely complicated, resource intensive and time consuming (took many years to process). The process is considered extremely frustrating in particular for community members.

In particular it is acknowledged that; pertinent, sensible and reasonable suggestions for conditions of consent were put forward by Council and the wider community to the IPC for the McPhillamys Gold Project consent. Frustratingly, none were implemented.

Post approval, Councils and our communities are heavily reliant on NSW Government Agencies together with other specialist experts to enforce and monitor conditions of consent, licences and overall compliance for mining operations.

In this regard, Councils experience in relation to NSW Government Agencies has not been positive, for any stakeholder, including; mining companies, Council and the community.

Councils view is that many stakeholders, have little to no confidence in NSW Government Agencies regarding mining operations, even though stakeholders are solely and heavily reliant upon those agencies to ensure, any potential impacts on human health, land, air and water quality are minimised.

Council highlights the conclusion from the final submission to the IPC for the recent McPhillamys Gold Project;

***“Conclusion***

*While the economic benefits associated with mining are enjoyed by the wider region and NSW economy generally, it is important to note that Council sincerely acknowledges the impact that will occur to our residents at Kings Plains who ultimately will bear the direct impact and disruption to their normal lives if the mine is developed.*

*Council and our community are heavily reliant on NSW Government agencies and this commission who, with other specialists, have the expertise and experience to make well informed decisions regarding this proposal on behalf of our wider community.*

*It is critically important that if approved the recommended conditions of consent are effective and enforceable.”*

Communities, mining companies and Councils need improved and greater; organisation, coordination, communication, transparency and accountability from NSW Government Agencies to ensure the co-desired outcomes of all 3 stakeholders are achieved and maintained.

Council acknowledges mining is a critically important industry within regional NSW, in particular for the Blayney Shire. It is regional communities though that bear 100% of the impact from mining operations in NSW, whilst all of NSW benefits, in particular from the immense royalties generated.

In this regard, Council notes in recent years the positive impact the NSW Government 'Resources for Regions' (R4R) grant program has provided and achieved, where a minute amount (approx. 2%) of mining royalties paid to the NSW Government have been directed back to the 26 Councils and their communities impacted the most from mining operations.

Council has been able to proactively use this funding stream to significantly improve infrastructure and amenities throughout the entire shire. Projects delivered have included; renewal of aging bridges, significant road improvement projects, new and upgraded walking paths / tracks and a major aquatic centre upgrade.

It is highlighted that in 2022/23 the NSW Government raised approximately \$5.5 billion from mining royalties and returned \$140 million (approx. 2%) through R4R round 9, back to 26 Councils impacted the most from mining operations.

Noting the NSW budget is due on 19 September 2023, at the time of writing this submission, no commitment from the NSW Government had been made, ensuring the continuance of the Resource for Regions program. This is extremely concerning for Council.

It is noted the NSW budget estimates, forecast \$11 billion in mineral royalties to 2025/26. Noting this, it is critical that the Resource for Regions direct allocation program is continued and improved upon (surely the significant impact on regional communities is worth more than 2% of the royalties generated) for the 26 LGAs significantly impacted by mining operations in NSW.

Should you require further information regarding this matter please contact myself

Yours sincerely

Scott Ferguson  
**Mayor**