

Submission
No 120

**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

To whom it may concern,

or rather what measures have you taken to make sure that this actually does concern you?

Too many people involved in the decision making process of mining in NSW don't have to concern themselves directly with the impact of mining on local ecologies or on the communities that live here.

I am a resident of kandos NSW and through living here I have first hand knowledge of the concerns of the community over the hazards of mining. There are people in my surrounding areas in the central west that spend a lot of their UNPAID labour writing letters to either attempt to raise concerns over an impending mine or ones that have already been set up and running and polluting for years. This is constant work. Over the ten years I have lived here the issues with mines have not stopped.

And the people who live here don't just raise concerns via letter writing and submissions. They have to do all their own research, pay for doctors and scientists and lawyers and public relations people to have their voices and concerns heard. They are concerned for their livelihoods, their livestock and their children. They are concerned for the health of the surrounding landscape and its ecology. So far, throughout NSW, the onus has been on the local community to provide evidence of damages or wrong doing. It is a costly undertaking, not just in time and money but the well-being of the community.

It's time that the mines shoulder the responsibility of not just the care that the community have for their local natural and social environment but the financial and emotional burden. Mining companies deliberately set people up to fight one another in the community. They are never held responsible for this.

Government and the mines need to gain back the TRUST of the communities that live next to the mines. The communities need to know that the Government and the Mining Companies care about them and the environment that they live in.

My concerns that need to be addressed by this inquiry

1. RESPONSIBILITY - the lack of ACCOUNTABILITY that the mines have, not just for the local ecology, water and air quality but for the community as well. Accountability needs to be evenly distributed and fair. Fines are inadequate and disproportionate to the damages incurred. They also don't address the losses incurred by the community for loss of livestock or damage to their health.

2. TRUST - the mines must show that they respect the concerns of the community. Their submission to the IPC only showed CONTEMPT for the intelligence of the local community and their concerns for their livelihood, children, livestock and water and air quality. Bowden's Silver Mine's ability to liaise with Community has been woeful to say the least. The mines need to demonstrate that they have behaved in a trustworthy manner. The onus is always on the community to do the monitoring and bring attention to problems. This work is UNPAID and EXHAUSTING. Shift the onus to the mining companies that they are the ones who have to prove that they are going above and beyond for their local environment and the local community.

3. CARE - The proposal to the IPC by Bowden's Silver Mine showed a complete lack of concern for the ecology of their surrounds, or the people who live there. No profit should be gained without first addressing your care for the local ecology.

4. COMPENSATION - people do a lot of unpaid labour holding the mines accountable. The mines need to start paying community members for all of this work regardless of whether the work supports the mine or not. I spend a lot of valuable time writing submissions without getting paid, and I know of hundreds of others. If Bowden's Silver Mine goes ahead, this time will only increase over the lifetime of its lease and beyond. I write this in the full knowledge that the mines make a huge profit. They get paid for what they do, but the community who has to hold them accountable, do not. We know that the relationship between people and mining companies is unequal. One way of counterbalancing that would be that the mine pay for every submission. If you actually want to know what we think, how we feel, what we need or are concerned about, the mine needs to pay people out of their huge profit margin. Another suggestion would be that those who live locally to the mine are paid to monitor water and air quality. And the expenses of this paid for by the mine without owning any of the information. Access to this information should be freely available.

5. TRANSPARENCY- No non-disclosure clauses. No confidentiality clauses. No non-disparagement clauses. The mining industry needs to be TRANSPARENT in its contracts held by an employee or community group. We should not live next to a potential disaster and not be able to say, or discuss anything.

We are the ones who have to live next to the mine. The government, the shareholders and the board don't have to live next to the consequences of mining. Share the responsibilities, share the profits, share the trust.

Sent from my iPad