

Submission
No 124

**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: Elephant Mountain Wine

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Dated: 3rd September 2023

Terms of Reference

1. That Portfolio Committee No. 2 inquire into and report on current and potential impacts of gold, silver, lead and zinc mining on human health, land, air and water quality in New South Wales, in particular:

(a) the impact on the health of local residents and mine workers, including through biomagnification and bioaccumulation

(b) the impact on catchments and waterways, affecting both surface and groundwater destined for, local and town water supplies, including rainwater tanks, and on aquatic biodiversity

(c) the impact on land and soil, crops and livestock, including through biomagnification and bioaccumulation.

(d) the adequacy of the response and any compliance action taken by the regulatory authorities in response to complaints and concerns from communities affected by mining activities

We are a multi purpose farm of 173 acres 3.7 kms from the middle of the pit. NOT ONCE have we had a visit from Bowdens Silver, or their specialist team to discuss what we do here, and who this mine will be affecting.

Our family moved to this beautiful part of the world 8 years ago. We were drawn to the beautiful valley and the peace, the fresh air and welcoming community after city living. We have a large family 4 adult children with partners and 10 grandchildren.

We have a flourishing wine business, where we employ 14 people on a part time or casual basis. We have an award-winning vineyard with all our wines being acknowledged as some of the best in NSW and Australia.

We also have a 6-bedroom guest house which hosts over 350 regional visitors per year. These visitors are bringing into the Mid Western region a spend of approximately \$150,000.00 using the average figures supplied by Mudgee Regional tourism of average spend per person of \$398.00. We employ Lue and Rylstone locals for housekeeping and help in the gardens.

We also run a small herd of cattle numbering 35, who drink from our 3 dams and graze in the paddocks.

We also have chickens that supply us our guests with eggs, nothing like fresh farm eggs.

We rely on tank water for drinking, bathing, laundry for both the guest house and our own home.

We have an extensive vegetable garden, this produce is use to make jams, chutneys, relishes we sell in our cellar door in Mudgee, also we offer our guests fresh vegetables during their stay or when there is an abundance to take home. We employ a local lady to help us out with is garden.

So now you have a picture of our life busy as it is, what will become of all of this if the mine is to be approved?

Bowdens are saying they will have a trigger response to incidents of escaping dust.

This will be after the fact, We can expect fine lead dust to be dispersed throughout the valley.

But as Bowdens will have us believe it will not affect us.

We think 3.7km is not far enough away to keep us safe - so our dams (irrigation for grapes, vegetable garden, stock) tank water, building roofs (from which we get our household water). Our paddocks (feed for cattle), Grapes will also be covered as well as the soil from which they draw nutrients.

Who would want to stay with us when there will be blasting 6 days a week, noise travels in the valley and Bowdens will have us believe we will not hear the noise. You can hear a gunshot tens of kilometres away it reverberates off the hills and bounces around the valley, imagine a blast from mine site plus vehicle movement.

Light pollution will also be a factor as we are on an elevation and at present, we can see the lights of the Ulan mine 30 plus kms away. So, 3.7 kms we will have a nightly light show (not a good one).

One of the big draw cards for visitors is the star show every clear night, they often comment how beautiful the night sky is. This will be gone once Bowdens start up, no more 'dark site' sky scenes

Vibration of earth moving equipment and blasting, guests will not want that, they come for the peace and quite of the country setting.

We wash all linen in the tank water, how do we sell the fact they will be sleeping in linen enhanced with fine lead dust and bathing in lead contaminated water.

We will no longer be able to offer local produce from our garden or eggs from the chickens for fear of lead contamination.

Our farm stay business will no longer exist, our income will be severely compromised, who will compensate us for this loss, and supply us with fresh water?

Our grape and wine producing business will also be compromised as we cannot sell contaminated grapes nor produce wine from contaminated grapes, no winery will take our fruit. We would have to test grapes, leaves, soil at all stages of growth.

Who will pay for baseline testing and DPI testing? This is not a cheap exercise and would have to be done throughout growth and production. No one wants to buy contaminated wine. So, after we sell all our existing pre mine stocks we will no longer have an award winning winery. Our cellar door will have to close, along with those jobs.

Who will compensate us for loss of income, and testing?

Our cattle drink from our dams and feed on grasses from our paddocks, with fine lead dust having settled on dams and paddocks the cattle will ingest this and meat will be contaminated, we will have to have cattle tested regularly for lead levels. The market will not buy or process contaminated beef.

Who will compensate us for lost of income and testing?

After our livelihood has been decimated, no longer tourism operator, food producer, grape grower, wine producer and cattle producer who would want to buy our beautiful property, we have been advised we would lose 30% of our valuation at present, that is if anyone would every buy it..

Who will compensate us for loss of valuation?

This is true of all of Lue and surrounds we will become a waste land, people will leave and ANOTHER vibrant community will be destroyed. We have seen this happen in the Bylong Valley, Wollar and other communities.

Bowdens own specialists are unable to give us a straight answer when it comes to:

- *Dust suppression, when there is not enough water.
- *Leakage of tailings dams.
- *Rehabilitation even after mining cessed

Voluntary Aquation, should be offered to anyone living within 6kms of the mine.

Health of Grandchildren numbering 10 ages 10 months to 12 years old, my own children, their partners, myself and husband, is of a huge concern.

THE PEOPLE OF LUE AND THE SURROUNDING AREAS OF RYLSTONE, KANDOS, MUDGEES AND GULGONG SHOULD NOT BE TREATED AS GUINEA PIGS FOR A MINE THAT HAS SO MANY FLAWS IN THEIR PROPOSED PLANNING.