

Submission
No 128

**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: Cameron Scott-Fell

Date Received: 4 September 2023

Partially
Confidential

2/9/2023

C&D Scott-Fell

The NSW Legislative Councils Portfolio Committee 2

Re: The Lue Lead Mine

Dear Members:

My name is Cameron Scott-Fell "WONGA" . We are located 8 kms east of the Lead Mine site where we breed cattle & sheep.

I wish to address some of the terms of reference. Please note I have lodged written submissions to NSW Planning on the 23/7/20, 12/8/21 & addressed the commission hearing in Mudgee a few months ago.

It is my view (without prejudice) that NSW Planning realised their initial approval was flawed in many areas & to appear impartial they chose to appoint a "so-called" independent commission. This appointment prevents any appeal to the Land and Environment Court (unless on different grounds). This is a deliberate and questions tactic, in an attempt to derail any meaningful objection to their approval.

A: OBJECTION ISSUES

1. Lead Poisoning:

Note as universally accepted THERE IS NO SAFE LEVEL OF LEAD EXPOSURE. Our community does not want blood testing to determine what levels of heavy metals will occur in our system from exposure via wind or water emulating from the Lead mine. This condition is an admission of what will happen & it's unbelievable that NSW Planning & The Commission completely ignored that facts surrounding Lead Poisoning & initiated such a condition in the approval. This issue will have been dealt with in all submissions to the Committee particularly from well qualified experts & I implore the Committee to consider this issue very seriously. The release of lead is still Australia's largest polluter despite being banned in Petrol, Batteries, Paint, Building Materials, Ceramics etc. decades ago.

2. Water Extraction:

Up until relatively recently Bowden's via their consultants realized there was insufficient ground & creek water to sustain the proposed Lead mines operation. The solution then was to pipe water some 50 odd kms from the coal mines north of Mudgee to the mine site. Obviously, the cost & obtaining easements created several problems. Miraculously & Suspiciously Bowden's want us to believe that suddenly there is now sufficient water to operate the Lead mine. Again, there will be submissions to the committee that will totally dispel that notion. As farmers we rely on water from our bore, sourced from the same aquifer, which is reticulated for stock access & for firefighting. Bowden's in earlier communications advised they expected the water table would be lowered some 25m. This is most likely a conservative estimate & rings big alarm bells.

How is it possible that one user can totally dominate this precious source to the detriment of the community & agriculture.

3. Toxic Tailings Dam:

THIS DAM IS FOREVER & all dams eventually leak, from natural causes, welded joints to the liner failing, the relative short life span of liners, tree damage & the like. Unbelievably again NSW Planning & The Commission have failed to realise the massive environmental impact the toxic waste will have as it leaks into the aquifer & Lawsons Creek. To realise this toxic waste will remain forever in such a perilous open state ready for failure is absolutely unacceptable.

4. Toxic Cyanide:

Cyanide proposed to be used in the extraction process on site is a well-known extremely dangerous chemical & is one of the most rapidly lethal poisons that exists, while banned in many Countries. SO WHY AT LUE??

5. Who Comes First:

Agriculture is the dominant industry in the Lue/Rylstone district which has successfully continued since settlement in the 1820s without any unnatural impact such as a Lead mine. It is incongruous to have a Lead mine within the Lue & surrounding community, so how can a Lead mine 200 years later take precedence over community & agricultural life.

6. Employment vs Health:

Bowden's questionable predictions on employment opportunities may well be a good thing (notwithstanding my opposing comments) but why is a mining job being given preference over Agricultural & other Community jobs. Jobs that will be driven away because of obvious health issues & the points in general I have raised.

7. Bowden's Consultants Reports & Modelling:

Bowden's pay the consultants they engage so unsurprisingly they ensure such reports etc. are very favorable before release. I believe the same can be said about Peer reviews. NSW Planning & The Commission have been hoodwinked by the biased, inaccurate, incomplete & vague consultants reports, peer reviews & statements by Bowden's leading them to blindly approve the application.

8. Government Royalties:

Bowden's, by their own admission relayed to me at a Town Hall meeting in Rylstone in 2021 they expected the Government would receive around \$180 to \$220 million in royalties over the 16/20 years life of the Lead mine or say \$11 million per year. I ask the Committee to evaluate this paltry insignificant sum & how it stacks up against the repair cost to the environment, communities' health, destruction of agriculture, etc. particularly given NSW's GDP estimate for 2023 is \$332 Billion. THIS LEAD TIME ISN'T WORTH THE CONSEQUENCES.

9. Other Issues:

I will leave it to other community members to elaborate on the other many & various issues that add to the whole story of opposition to this Lead mine, namely:

- Dust
- Noise

- Lue's dislocation
- Acid rock drainage
- Effects on tourism
- Reduced real estate values
- Relocation of transmission lines closer & in view of the Lue Village
- Effects on marketing produce once contamination is found
- Destruction of Fauna & Flora

10. 10 Solutions & Recommendations

God forbid, should this Lead mine actually proceed the following are some suggestions that should be implemented when reviewing the current inadequate approval & included as additional conditions.

A: Implement strict monitoring of all aspects of the Lead mines operation at whatever cost by an independent authority perhaps funded via an ongoing Bond financed by Bowden's.

B: A massive increase to fines for all breaches to act as deterrent given the current level is a joke, e.g. \$16,000 fine the Cadia Hill gold mine at Orange which is a drip in the ocean in comparison to the magnitude of the operation.

C: Impose personal guarantees on Directors of both Bowden's & Consultants to underpin the validity of their statements & reports upon which approval has been granted including the enormous list of "yet to be resolved issues" noted in the approval documents.

D: Impose strict detailed conditions on how failures that affect Health & The Environment will be dealt with and sloved, which are certain to occur.

E: Ban the use of Cyanide

F: Remove the tailings dam & require a more acceptable solution.

G: Or completely redesign the dam that will last indefinitely (not possible I believe)

H: Require a complete & comprehensive review of the whole water issue by an independent Consultant.

I: Obviously there needs to be a review to overhaul the current inadequate & soft standards allowed by NSW Planning with the approval of the Bowden's Lead mine just 2 kms from the LUE Village.

I would like to thank The Committee for considering my submission. I agree to have it published & to attend a hearing if selected.

Yours Sincerely

Cameron Scott-Fell