

Submission
No 112

**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

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Partially
Confidential

05/09/2023

To Whom It May Concern:

My wife and I recently left Sydney and invested considerable funds in building an off-grid home in Rylstone . It has been the fulfillment of a long time dream to live in the country and in a pristine environment where life could be simpler and away from the difficulties of a large city like Sydney.

Imagine our horror and dismay to learn of the approval of Bowden's mine and the potential for exploration licenses a mere 5km from our residence! We understand that this mine has had a long history of being disapproved due to environmental concerns. How could it be suddenly approved in the face of overwhelming concerns which were presented to the IPC? Nothing magical has changed other than a thirst by the previous NSW government for certain minerals, environment be damned!

The approval process smacks of corruption, or of tactics that should be "corrupt" even if they technically are technically not.

- 1.How is it possible that a potential mining operation can come into communities and essentially divide people by buying support through sponsorships and by providing jobs before the approval process has even started?
- 2.How can local Mudgee councillors be permitted to be employees of the mine and hired to promote the mine in the community?
- 3.How can the mine be allowed to recruit submissions in favour of the mine from mining communities outside of NSW, and then after the approval claim "overwhelming" community support for the mine when the local submissions against the mine clearly outweighed those in favour?
- 4.Why are mines approved before they provide actual operating plans that address pollution concerns in the initial submission when such plans are clearly "pie in the sky "modeling" and have no actual basis in reality?
- 5.Why does the government allow approval of mines, such as the Bowden's Lead mine, to not be forced to buy up neighboring properties and businesses within a certain radius of the mine that will without doubt become polluted? (The actual modeling approved by the IPC verifies that lead dust will fall on neighboring properties.) Whilst it is okay for the NSW and national governments to make "deals" with international partners that will provide great tax windfalls to the government and then somehow claim that this is not tantamount to being in the public interest such that the principal of "Compulsory Acquisition" doesn't apply to those most affected? What we have is a mine getting approved and neighboring properties and businesses being rendered valueless. This is beastly unfair.
- 6.Why isn't the Environmental Planning Agency (EPA) involved in the process from the beginning? It seems quite absurd to first approve the mine and then have it

apply to the EPA after the fact. The EPA has stated that no amount of lead dust is acceptable, yet the IPC has approved a certain amount of dust and deemed it "safe."

7. The previous coalition government made sure that the IPC decisions, once made, may not be challenged except on extraordinarily expensive legal grounds and only if a legal flaw could be documented in the process. This places an incredibly unfair burden on the community to fight a process that seems to not have considered the evidence against the mine properly.

8. How can the IPC approval process force Bowden's to provide blood tests to those in the community requesting such tests with absolutely no consequences if said persons return a positive test for lead? The IPC seems to regard the modeling as "perfect" and believes that contamination will not occur so why should there be any consequences if it proves to be wrong? (As an aside, I defy anyone to demonstrate any lead mine that has not contaminated the environment.)

9. The consequences for mines that violate their operating licenses is a complete joke. Take Cadia as an example. The mine knew for two years that the exhaust stack was defective and did nothing. The fine was \$15,000...a complete joke and certainly not in line with making a mine do the right thing re regulations. In fact, were it not for the community of Orange taking matters into their own hands the EPA would not have become aware of the violations. The EPA appears to not be doing a proper job of enforcing regulations before damage occurs. It appears to be reactive rather than proactive. Mine CEOs that willfully violate their operating conditions ought to be jailed. Without proper enforcement of regulations people will never have any faith in what is stated in approval documents.

These are some of the reasons people in the Mudgee region are extremely upset and feel betrayed by the government. Whether or not there exists a "Bill of Rights" in Australia, people deserve to live freely in a pollution free environment and should have rights to life and liberty. The mining approval process in NSW violates the rights of people. Whilst I feel fairly strongly about these issues I am fully aware that mining is essential and needs to happen somewhere; but why in God's name would such a lead mine be approved in a prime agricultural and tourist area that is environmentally challenged already in terms of water? It is a form of madness. Other countries have banned open pit mining. Why is NSW operating in the dark ages?

Thanks for considering and for your work! The existence of this inquiry into mining has given some hope to our community for wrongs to be righted.

Sincerely,