

**Submission
No 142**

**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**

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I own a home in Kandos, NSW and have lived here for several years with my teenage daughters. I am very concerned about the planned Bowden's Lead, Zinc and Silver mine that will threaten the health of my family and that of the local community and, which will destroy the environment by leaching toxic chemicals into local waterways. I also have concerns about water management given our drought prone region and the lapses in monitoring the activities of existing mines, such as Cadia Gold Mine, by the Australian Government.

1. Concerns about Lead Dust on the health of my family and community

I moved to this area in 2019 to enjoy a quiet lifestyle in a beautiful region and have spent many hours developing my property, including an extensive garden, in order to live a more sustainable lifestyle. I plan to instal water tanks to provide water for my family and garden, and I am fearful of the impact that airborne lead will have on my own water supply, as well as the general water supply of the area. I am afraid that my children will be poisoned by exposure to airborne lead dust, lead dust that will settle on my roof, land and garden, and become incorporated into our drinking water.

I do not believe that there is any safe level of lead in the human body, and this is particularly so for children as it threatens, among other things, their IQ and cognitive abilities. Moreover, there are various other risks associated with elevated lead levels for both children and adults including delayed puberty and decreased kidney function in anyone over 12 years of age, increased blood pressure, decreased cognitive function, as well as risks to foetal development, including spontaneous abortion and preterm birth.

One indisputable fact is that this mine will produce a toxic dust, a dust that will be spread across the region and will affect the health of my family and community

2. Concerns about Contamination of our Environment

On the issue of water contamination from acid mine drainage, it is my understanding that the planned mine operators estimate that there will be around 1.6 megalitres of toxic chemicals that will leach into the groundwater system each and every day. Lawsons Creek, which feeds the Cudgegong River and provides the drinking water for Gulgong, will be contaminated forever. How can the Australian Government allow the drinking water of a whole community to be compromised in this way.

3. Concerns about water security

Australia already faces issues of water security as global warming impacts on our continent and rain patterns become more unpredictable; drought once again threatens our nation. How then do the mine operators propose to secure enough water to tamp down the 130 kilotons of disturbed lead in this drought-prone region. When the strong winds blow during a hot, dry summer, what will stop lead particles being spread far and wide, across the towns of Rylstone and Kandos, across agricultural land and into our water supply? And, on the question of water supply, how does the mine propose to access the 5 megalitres of water it will require every single day of its operations?

4. Concerns about monitoring of existing mining activity eg Cadia Gold Mine

I have seen a video taken of Cadia gold mine and am aware of the mine owners record with respect to protecting the local community from contamination. I have seen footage of the clouds of dust billowing for kilometres from the poorly maintained tailings site and mine vents discharging dust into the air unfettered by adequate filtration. I am more than aware that it was only through the actions

taken by local people to test their own blood and drinking water that the elevated levels of minerals from the mine became known.

The operators of Cadia mine have exposed a whole region to elevated levels of minerals in their drinking water. I am concerned that it will be no different with the proposed mine at Lue, that we too will become victims of an indifferent Government focused on developing a mining industry at all cost, a mine management that will operate with impunity, inadequate management of toxic tailings, and ill defined water management plans.