

**Submission
No 153**

**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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Submitted by: Jade Miskle

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BACKGROUND

I am the mother of two children I, together with my partner, have chosen to bring my children up in a clean natural environment close to nature and close to loving grandparents within a vibrant community. We chose Lue for its pristine waterways, unpolluted air, an abundance of wildlife and unspoilt landscape. We chose a healthy lifestyle , take personal responsibility for our health, and pose no burden on the health system.

I operate a

MY CONCERNS(These relate to 1) (a) & (g) in the terms of reference)

- As a parent, the recommendation of blood testing for LEAD and heavy metals, and the promise of no lead dust leaving the site of the mine, a site that clearly has no suitable water supply, provides no reassurance that my children will not be impacted.
- The regulations are not fit for purpose, and fail to protect my children
- The burden of health impact, falls unjustly on communities

The world health organisation states, “*there is no safe level of lead exposure* ” A statement that I continue to hear and repeat – a statement that appears to be of no weight to our Australian Health Institutions and NSW Govt Planning Bodies.

Parents are being misled by our health educators that they can protect their children from lead exposure.

In the report produced by the IPC on their reasons for approving the Bowdens Project , NSW health states, “*there is an absence of any outstanding concerns regarding health impacts that are unable to be appropriately managed* ”.

We continue to hear no risk to the community, but

It is a criminal act of our Governing Bodies to use critical mineral mining and its economic benefits to push aside the substantial lifelong impacts on human health and the wellbeing of the community. LEAD, is not a critical Mineral

The policies surrounding these approvals are completely inadequate and fail to take into consideration the momentous task of preventing health violations against communities.

Approx half of all children living in lead mining communities of Broken Hill, Port Pirie and Mount Isa have blood level levels exceeding the NHMRC acceptable level of 5 micrograms per decilitre.

I ask our government officials making these approvals , what would be an acceptable level of lead exposure for your children?

A recent study has also found that children living closest to the mine sites, had much lower levels of education in test scores, and had a much higher chance of being diagnosed with developmental delays and disabilities.

In fact our govt think it is acceptable to run programs to help educate families living in these areas on how to "safely live with lead."

This is an appalling abuse of Govt power; having families believe that they can safely live with LEAD, and removing liability from the government. They place the incomprehensive task and responsibility of living with such danger, back on the family.

I will not be subjecting my children to blood level testing in to monitor for Bowdens. A positive blood test confirming that they have been exposed to LEAD, because of substandard mining practices is too late. This is a barbaric request and a violation to my children's right to be safe in their own home and an imposition on their future.

Cadia is a perfect example that demonstrates the incredibly difficulty placed on the community to prove there has been exposure to heavy metals due to poor mining practices. The burden of toxic exposure **and** the burden to prove such, falls unjustly on community. Further exasperating the difficulty, NSW health attempted to discourage GPs in the region, from testing for heavy metals. The situation was played down as "Not to cause unnecessary alarm" and to "only test if symptoms where present." Symptoms are a late indicator, by the time symptoms are present in children, the damage done will be irreversible. Those children, being left as statistics, to hopefully, improve metal mining's future practices and to prevent future incidents.

We can clearly see the EPA and Govt response to this situation is reactive and not proactive. This gives me no faith that these regulatory bodies will protect us from a disaster occurring at the Bowdens site.

We become the collateral damage of the Lead & Silver mining so our government can secure economic benefits.

The US follow the guidelines that there is no safe level of exposure, yet in Australia we consider some levels of exposure to be safe and merely encourage behaviour to minimise the risks.

Lead exposure for children is incredibly dangerous, lead that a child inhales is almost always 100% absorbed and 20-50% of lead ingested is usually absorbed. Approx. 70% of lead is stored in children's teeth and bones.

During pregnancy and breastfeeding lead stored in a woman's bones from previous exposure can be leech and be passed onto their child.

The EPA state that no dust containing Lead, or any other dust for that matter, can leave the Bowdens site if operation commences. Do you have complete faith that this is possible?

Each Mineral/Metal mine has great management plans on paper. They use the latest technology available, predicted data and figures. However, I ask our policymakers, what level of risk would you subject your family to? The policymakers and planners don't bother

to come and visit nor do any take the people of these communities into serious consideration , when approving these mines

I urge you to visit these families , the homes of which , you have the potential to destroy , and ask yourselves would you be ok with your children living within 10km from such a mine site

If your answer is no, then clearly a much stronger approval process needs to be met

Please do not ignore the wealth of knowledge & scientific data being submitted during this inquiry, the same way it was blatantly dismissed during the IPC hearing.

Please do not ignore the submissions that people have poured their heart and souls into with the hopes of protecting their families and their homes , they are important too , and should be heard.