

**Submission
No 168**

**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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Parliament of New South Wales.

Parliamentary 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.

My name is David Clarke. I am a 64-year-old 4th generation farmer in the Rylstone district and recently retired chair of the Mudgee District Branch of NSW Farmers Association. Together with my wife Tracy and son Jonathon, we operate PH Clarke & Son as mixed farming business focusing on prime sustainably produced grass-fed Angus beef. Jonathon & Brianne (wife) have 3 sons all of us living on the Family property "Mt Brace".

My remarks and concerns are mainly directed towards term 3 and term 4 of the Inquiries terms of reference. They deal with possible pasture and soil contamination and the mining company's ability to adequately compensate.

Our concerns about any open cut heavy metal mining with in our locality are principally about possible pasture contamination as we are located upstream, east of Lue. Others will no doubt highlight water issues and downstream threats.

The high possibility of dust leaving the Bowden Lue mine site and carrying Lead and other heavy metals onto nearby grasslands is of particular concern to us. Grazing livestock consuming contaminated pastures could well exceed safe slaughter levels leaving local graziers like ourselves locked out of markets and without an income until the contamination is resolved.

There have been past cases of lead contaminated meat picked up by abattoir surveillance in the past. These have triggered an immediate shut down until the source of contamination can be determined. Sometimes that means that large areas, hundreds of square kilometres effectively quarantined pending. Fortunately, in most cases the source has been very localised for example animal access to a car battery on a single farm, resulting in quick resolution and very limited impact. But with wide spread airborne lead particles we may not be so fortunate. The impacts could cover many properties and farming enterprises with expensive prolonged



clean-up process to follow. With the immediate effect of shut-down over a far wider area.

The financial burden of a widespread heavy metal contamination would be beyond most farming family's capacity to sustain and effectively cripple the local grazing industry. Compounded with the direct human health implications of such exposure to contaminants just raises the bar of concern even higher.

Who will compensate us or other farmers if our farms are contaminated?

Does Bowdens have the financial resources to compensate should contamination occur on a number of properties?

Bearing in mind agricultural production (not just livestock) for whole region could be regarded suspect until cleared by authorities.

For their part Bowdens have always maintained that dust suppression and keeping all of the resource on site is a paramount priority, and without questioning their resolve or best intentions, have to wonder if they can really deliver that outcome. Is it worth the risk to all the surrounding existing agricultural enterprises, that currently support the local community? I think not.

I recognise the current high demand for rare earths and semi-precious and precious metals driven in part by renewable energy industry places Bowdens Lue project and others as significant projects, however, such projects should not be considered in isolation to the surrounding other industries and community interests. Whatever process that is undertaken to ensure satisfactory outcomes and assurances must consider the whole of community over the longer term and should be fair and equitable, not to place the whole burden or risk on the shoulders of their neighbours.

I may no longer represent on behalf of local farmers, however after 2 decades of active representation I have a fair idea of what local farmers think a fair outcome would be. We are committed to low carbon future, and best practices of animal and environmental welfare. We support good stewardship of our land and our people. We meet all sorts of new challenges every day, we don't need the added risk of lead and other contamination to our livelihood.

Thank you for your consideration,

David Clarke.



P. H. Clarke & Son