

Submission  
No 169

**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  
**Date Received:** 5 September 2023

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Partially  
Confidential

## Background

We have lived in the direct Cadia area for the past 4.5 years

We have lived in the general area (Carcoar, Millthorpe, Orange) for 15+ years

In mid 2021 we were involved in the development of a group whose aim was to protect the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of community members as a result of noted increase in dust originating from the (Cadia) mine site. This prompted residents to investigate what was in the dust and if we should be worried. This developed into the Cadia Community Sustainability Network (CCSN).

As part of this community discussion/investigation, we had our tank water tested by the CCSN in February 2023. The results reported higher than acceptable levels of Zinc, Lead, Nickel, Copper, Chromium, Cadmium and Arsenic. This was incredibly alarming to our family as we considered the impact this was having and had previously had on our family, given the time we have been in the district.

Of major concern are comments made by Cadia mine representatives suggesting that the vent outputs have been unfiltered forever and only regulated very recently when required by the EPA.

Once high levels of heavy metals were being found in numerous tanks around the district, Newcrest was approached by CCSN for explanation and to determine if it was the mine dust causing the metal levels. Newcrest initiated isotope testing and then openly dismissed all responsibility for lead levels in surrounding water supply.

Once we received those initial high metal levels in our drinking water supply we stopped drinking our tank water and purchased bottled water, with a set up cost of nearly \$500 in an already tight economic time. At this point we took up the offer that Newcrest had made, to supply us (and the rest of the community) with bottled water. This is still being supplied and we are still using it exclusively for drinking and meal preparation.

It has been very concerning to us whether the dust and other contaminants specifically diesel emissions, are affecting our children's and our health.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June details of the water and dust issues in this area hit the mainstream media and from this point forward, our otherwise well booked AirBNB has not had a booking – putting major stress on our already stretched finances.

8<sup>th</sup> August, we had blood and hair samples taken, the results of which we have yet to received. This has further contributed to the stressed mental condition of our family.

We grow our own vegetables as well as beef and lamb raised on our pastures. Our worry extends further to the possibility of contamination of our health from multiple sources.

The EPA have also tested samples of our water in the tank and at our point of use. While these have come back as within normal limits the testing procedure was concerning and we have yet to receive the deep water/sludge sample results from this testing. This is the tank level where the original high readings came from. The testing equipment that the EPA brought with them was inappropriate for the type of samples they were taking simply in so far as they were unable to get a reliable sample easily.

Newcrest were fined by the EPA for excessive dust emissions recently. This fine was a total of \$15,000, which equates to 1/100<sup>th</sup> of 1% of their net profit in 2022. It appears obvious why the big mining companies do not feel the need to take the EPA seriously.

As a resident living in close proximity to the mine, it is disappointing that an environmental agency has such little recourse against big companies blatantly flouting the rules.

We have contemplated selling and moving on numerous occasions due to the added stress levels of this ongoing issue and feel cheated that we should be contemplating a move from a property we love so much and worked so hard to get. Even if we did try and sell at this stage, the reputation of the mine and the ongoing issue would preclude us from obtaining true market value. We are concerned that our hard earned asset is decreasing in value due to a failure in policing of critical regulations. Regulations that have the capacity – as proven – to affect the health and wellbeing of a broad community of people.