

**Submission
No 173**

**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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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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Background:

Until 2014 my partner and I were landholders In Lue, NSW. Our property In Powells Road bordered the proposed Bowdens Silver Project. We had no choice but to unwillingly sell our property to Bowdens, which was then owned by Kingsgate Consolidated and leave the area, because of the proximity of the proposed toxic mine and its tailings dam to our house and surrounds.

I am surprised and disappointed, after all these years, that I am having to write yet another submission and/or letter of objection in opposition to the proposed mine. However I thank the Committee for instigating this Inquiry and giving the community another chance to be heard.

Concerns:

Our concerns in particular relate to:

(a) **the impact on the health of local residents**

The proposed Bowdens Silver mine is an open-cut silver, lead and zinc mine. The negative impacts of lead on humans, in particular children, are well known and documented. There is no doubt that the toxic dust from this mine and the trucks transporting the ore, will not be able to be contained, even if the company is able to wet down the dust as they claim. The wetting down of the dust will not only be a huge use of a scarce resource but the contaminants will flow into waterways and onto and into the soil. This will have serious health consequence for the community, the small Lue Primary school, just 2 kms away, as well as on biodiversity and the environment.

(b) **the impact on catchments and waterways**

As in (a) above, the toxic dust will impact rainwater tanks, catchments and waterways, including Lawson Creek and the Windamere Dam, the water supply of Mudgee. This is a very dry area and, with the impacts of climate change, could become dryer into the future. The amount of water required by the proposed mine will deplete the surface and ground water and acquifer, reducing the water available for humans, livestock and crops.

(c) **the adequacy of response and any compliance action taken by regulatory authorities**

It is my view from observing mining projects, including Kingsgate, when it owned the Bowdens resource, that compliance action is not taken seriously and that the authorities are not in a position to monitor all projects properly. Fines are minor and considered just a cost of doing business.

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(d) the effectiveness of the regulatory framework in terms of monitoring, compliance, etc.

As above.

(e) the effectiveness of decommissioning and rehabilitation practices

There are very few examples of successful decommissioned and rehabilitated mines. Often by the time the mine's life is over, the mining company has either been liquidated or the original mine sold to another company that cannot afford to rehabilitate to a correct standard. In Bowdens case they say they will make the open cut mine into a lake. Where will the water come from and how will the surrounding land be made viable?

(f) the destruction and demise of the community impacted by the proposed mine

Several families have had to leave the area because of the mine. Like us, they have had to leave friends and established networks. A small town like Lue will be non-existent, except for a small number of short term mine employees, if the mine actually becomes a working mine. Other small towns in the Mudgee region have become ghost towns because of mining (eg Wollar). The Mudgee/Rylstone Region is a vibrant wine growing, olive growing and tourist area which should be protected and encouraged instead of decimated as it would be if the Bowdens mine progresses.

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