

**Supplementary
Submission
No 114d**

**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

This submission relates to the Term of Reference (h) whether the regulatory framework for heavy metals and critical minerals mining is fit for purpose and able to ensure that the positive and negative impacts of heavy metals and critical minerals mining on local communities, economies (including job creation) and the environment are appropriately balanced and any related matters.

On 3 April 2023 the Independent Planning Commission (IPC) although presented with a great deal of evidence in the form of over 1005 objections to this project as well as submissions and expert advice found on the DPE Major Projects website, and in person expert presentations at the hearings in Mudgee in February 2023 has erroneously approved the Bowdens Silver Project. This project is a lead, zinc and silver mine 2 kilometres from a school and much closer to homes.

The IPC states in the Executive Summary of the Statement of Reasons for Decision that NSW Health and the NSW Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) had no outstanding concerns regarding health impacts that cannot be managed. Clearly the IPC had not properly considered the advice from those two government agencies. The advice from NSW Health was obviously a standard letter which rubber stamped this mine with no consideration of the impacts and consequences to either the people of NSW and their health or the impacts on NSW Health itself. A phone conversation with Tim Brokenshire from NSW Health confirmed that he had not properly considered the Bowdens project. He is not a medical doctor. He is not qualified to give any advice regarding the potential impacts of this mine on human health.

The EPA was and is extremely concerned about this project. They have stipulated that no water be released from the site. Obviously if 1.6 megalitres of water is seeping from the tailings dam each day this will cause the EPA many concerns. No condition imposed by the IPC can prevent or manage this seepage.

The IPC should have been aware of the health problems experienced by residents living near Cadia and other mines. Residents near Lue will experience the same health problems as those living near Cadia. Professor Taylor told them, both in written reports and in person at the IPC Hearing. Roger Drew, Drew Toxicology, who undertook the health assessment for the NSW DPE raised concerns. Many other experts reported that this mine would contaminate the air and water supply of Lue and the surrounding district.

The IPC on the advice of the NSW DPE and contrary to all experts, ignored advice that the health of NSW residents would be irreversibly impacted.

The IPC Commissioners Peter Duncan AM, Clare Sykes and Peter Cochrane have been negligent in accepting and agreeing that submissions supporting the economic benefits of the mine have a greater importance than the health of NSW residents. The IPC Commissioners had access to economic reports and other financial advice that refuted the economic benefits of this mine. In fact those experts came to the conclusion that there would be no new jobs created by this project and the financial benefits from this mine were overstated and unlikely.

What kind of Government allows a situation where a decision maker can compare a submission from a shareholder in Western Australia or an unsigned, unnamed one word

submission with a submission from a young family who lives near the mine site who have been told the mine will not compensate them or purchase their property.

Not one of the key issues mentioned in the Statement of Reasons for Decision being human health and amenity, water, traffic and transport, social impacts, economic impacts, Aboriginal cultural heritage, biodiversity, rehabilitation and final landform have been found to have positive impacts.

The IPC has determined that the submissions it received in support of the application, from shareholders, employees, and other unrelated mining supporters are more important than the potential impacts of the mine on human health and the livelihoods of those who live near the mine site.

Bowdens are actively exploring on a recently issued exploration license and should they find another "largest undeveloped silver deposit" they will not have a secure water supply that will allow them to economically process the ore they mine. Water is a precious resource in this region and being in the upper catchment of the Macquarie Bogan River system there is no access to regulated water.

Any metal mining in this region has little or no chance of success given the lack of infrastructure including water supply, electricity, road and rail network. In addition existing businesses of tourism and agriculture are incompatible with metal mining.

Silver, lead and zinc are not critical minerals. These minerals are not rare or in short supply.

Metal mining at any cost in the Central West of NSW is one of the worst strategies put forward by the previous government and while it might look great in a brochure will have little chance of success and the environmental damage and impacts on health and water resources that will occur in the Mudgee, Lue, Rylstone and Kandos Region from this activity will far outweigh any perceived benefits.