

Objection to McPhillamy Mine Proposal

When the development of McPhillamys Mine project was first announced, it sparked my interest to see just how they thought this project could be developed. I was involved with the site in 2008/9, working as a contractor for Alcan, the company who originally discovered the gold there. I prepared the drilling sites at the start for the rigs to set up and reclaimed the sites back to their original appearance after they were finished.

In 2017/18 my partner and I heard about representatives from Regis approaching some of our neighbours in the area to discuss plans for a potential "Goldmine" in the area. About the same time, I was diagnosed with a terminal lung disease, the prognosis was not good and at that time they thought I may only have a few years left. We thought it best if we spoke to Regis personally as we were unsure of our immediate future, my lungs do not cope well with the cold air in this area.

After contacting Regis several times, a representative was finally available to visit us, so an appointment was made for late one evening. At this initial meeting in our house there were maps highlighting proposed development however it was obvious by his attitude that he had no authority or inclination to address our concerns, the most positive response was that McPhillamys "might" buy us out at market value AFTER they received planning permission go ahead. We decided to sell our property privately.

In August 2019 we listed our property with a realtor to sell, the agent thought because we were only a few hundred metres from the proposed mine boundary we should list for a lower price. Within 48 hours after listing, we accepted an offer to sell from a private buyer. The "Mine" was no secret and the purchaser was encouraged to contact Regis for more information. Apparently, this resulted in a negative response and the buyers withdrew from the sale because of it.

Public submissions were called for by the State DPE for pending approval. We lodged an objection on the grounds that Regis had taken control of the real estate market in the Kings Plains area among other things. To our surprise, some months later representatives from Regis wanted to see us concerning our objection. During the meeting they showed us how the plans had been modified to protect the environment etc. They had nothing to report on the objections we had lodged and when asked, didn't know what our objections were.

In late 2019, during an open display by Regis in the Blayney community Centre, we were encouraged to speak to the Managing Director of Regis. He at least appeared to be sympathetic to our situation and thought the company would probably be able to buy our property at Market value after they received planning approval. Imagine our surprise when we heard late last year that a list with about 20 landholders from the Kings Plains area were being offered contracts from McPhillamys to sell and relocate after planning approval was granted... We were not on that list. Well played McPhillamy, you have divided the community again.

We are currently the sole Australian / New Zealand agents for Specialized Saddles which we import from USA and distribute. The saddles we retail are unique in that they can be adjusted to "fit" the horse. We fit the saddles personally where possible or via Video link where distance where distance is a problem. During the warmer months we also run Horsemanship lessons and work with client's horses on our property. I know our business will be impacted by the proximity of the mine. Some of our clients have already indicated they do not wish to continue coming here when the Mine commences operation.

One of my greatest fears is the effect the mine will have on air quality; I have been assured by Regis representatives that the "Dust" will be monitored on site. Any dust will be unacceptable as the water being used to control it will be contaminated water. This means it will impact surface water quality (most residents have rainwater tanks which will be directly affected). The Belubula river headwaters are owned by McPhillamys, with so much native flora, fauna and fish dependant on this water not to mention the economic risk to thousands of irrigators who feed us between here and South Australia where the Murray River spills into the ocean, can we afford the "RISK" of probable contamination. We should also be aware of what is happening in Port Hedland WA. The volume of Iron Ore being stored and loaded from the dock area has been identified as the main source of dust in the town, which is far above the limits considered to be safe for humans. Are the mining companies reducing the dust level? No, the WA State Government has offered them a "Special Permit" to keep operating and joint funding to help buy the worse effected areas!!

I feel if the mine is granted permission to progress it should be under the condition that they purchase and/or compensate all neighbours within a reasonable distance from their boundary. I have heard of Cadia mine purchasing property 6 kilometres away that had been effected by their blasting.

The mine, if it goes ahead, should also be subject to strict monitoring by an independent environmental body to ensure the safety of the Belubula river catchment area. Accountability from the top down for should also be enforced with appropriate penalties that apply to a multi-million-dollar company

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