



WELLINGTON VALLEY WIRADJURI  
ABORIGINAL CORPORATION

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To the Commissioners of the Independent Planning Commission,

Wellington Valley Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation (WWWAC) represents multiple traditional owner families of this region of which our traditional lands cover the entirety of this project and further lands. Our Elders and traditional family representatives believe that Aboriginal Cultural Heritage is not just aboriginal artefacts and sites but holistic environmental management. Our charter is to protect Aboriginal Culture and our Heritage on our country and our aim is to work with all relevant parties to achieve our objectives.

We have very serious concerns in regards to this project and on various occasions have objected to it and today we continue to hold our position in Strongly Objecting to the project, on the basis that this is an area of high significance to our people and cannot condone the destruction of sites and or artefacts, nor can we condone the environmental damage to seasonal water sources and ground water runoff which will cause other negative environmental issues.

We as the Traditional Custodians of this land have serious concerns around the future negative socio-economic impacts for Lue and wider within the region. This can be seen at Wollar with Peabody Energy Wilpinjong Coal, where the property was systematically purchased by the mine, the school closed and buildings are slowly being demolished and long term generational residents have moved away not only from Wollar but from the Mid-Western Regional Council area to resettle in places like Dubbo and Sydney. There are great fears that this will occur at Lue, not immediately but progressively over the mine lifespan.

I have spoken to a farmer who's family have been in Lue for several generations, they did not make a submission at any stage of the process because they were told they would not be affected and now that they have a child, they are very concerned around the potential from dust from this proposed mine and what affect on their and their child's health in the future and are weighing up if they sell and move to somewhere away from anywhere a mine could be developed now or in the future. Please think back to the site inspection, standing on Bingman Hill with you back to the proposed open cut, feeling that strong breeze blowing from there directly in line to the village of Lue and what affect that may have on those residents and the school children at Lue.

WWWAC have major concerns around the threatened and endangered flora and fauna species that this project will directly impact, such as the Regent Honey Eater and Koalas which are now classified as Endangered that are in the area and evidence has been found in the biodiversity report for them to be on and within the Bowdens Mine area. If this project is approved, there is a real risk that this endangered species population which is already regrettably small, will not survive and die out in this and surrounding land.

We also have concerns around the water table, we understand Bowdens have used modelling and experts, however the farmers from right there at Lue will tell you that the mine will change surface water runoff and aquifers and this will in turn affect the water supply that they rely on not only for their stock, crops but for their own personal consumption.

This point also raises concerns for the small threatened platypus colony in Lawsons Creek, if the water table is affected by the proposed mine in a negative way and we have another drought as bad or worse than what we recently experienced or there is contamination of the water source from acid leaching or the sedimentary dam falling and that small threatened platypus colony in Lawsons Creek is wiped out what consequences will Bowdens have, as nothing will bring that population back.

On a heritage standpoint WVVAC's position in regards to this project is that, we strongly object. We have had various members who are Field Specialists with specific Cultural Heritage and Environmental knowledge attend different phases of the surveys and archaeological investigations. Their views were similar in that the following concerns were raised:

- Surveys have been conducted where all Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAP's) have been rostered to attend on different days and split into survey teams, RAP's Organisations have not been informed by the archaeologist or by Bowden's as to what was found or seen by the RAP's in various areas rostered on the different days individual survey reports.
- Concerns have repeatedly been raised by myself at the Bowdens Community Consultative Committee Meetings regards the lack of information and process by which ALL RAP's in this region operate relating to the Code of Practice. For example senior Archaeologists who work in this region have repeatedly given the process for consultation and field work as the following:

1. Registration/Invitation to RAP's to attend
2. Methodology Document sent to RAP's for comment (28 day period)
3. Physical Field Assessment
4. Draft Field Assessment Report sent to RAP's for comment (28 day period) after each survey has been conducted, this gives Aboriginal community time to discuss and make recommendations for which we have not been allowed.
5. Final Report including the comments by RAP's
6. Final Report forms part of EIS then
7. Consultation with RAP's to develop an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan

From the above process at Bowdens for this project has been lacking and what we in the Aboriginal Community have encountered has been:

1. to supply a methodology,
2. Split RAP's in the field,
3. Not supply a draft survey report after each survey for our response to confirm if it is correct and make recommendations specific to cultural heritage sites
4. Not to supply a final survey report
5. They have Supplied a Draft Cultural Heritage Section of the EIS only for comment, by which time various people who were there had either died or left and not left any notes, this relates to 3 RAP groups including WVVAC.
6. No consultation has been had regarding developing an Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Management Plan, whereas Regis McPhillamy Gold Mine already have a draft developed with RAP consultation for the proposed mine and proposed water pipeline.

Bowdens continue to believe they have complied with the consultation guidelines and not agreed with Aboriginal Community Concerns raised through me at CCC meetings and with the Bowdens hierarchy repeatedly.

We as Aboriginal People of this region have grave concerns for the waste rock area and the potential for acid leaching to Hawkins Creek and subsequently Lawsons Creek. We believe that the risk of acid leaching is a real environmental threat if allowed to proceed. This will have on flow consequences for Lawsons Cree and the Cudgegong River.

WVVAC Traditional Apical Families from this project area have raised the serious concerns around the mine end of life, as it is intended that the mine finish up and leave the waste rock emplacement



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and a large hole, this does not sit well with anyone from the Aboriginal Community, We want the land rehabilitated back to something similar to natural with endemic local species of flora being used of which, the latter is planned, however only to cover over the Waste Rock Emplacement and the Sedimentary Dam areas and let water fill the hole. We as Traditional Aboriginal Community do not want this.

As a CCC Member I have spoken to a lot of people about this project, a common theme is that yes there are financial benefits for the project going ahead, however ALL these people supporting it or wanting to work there don't actually live here and go home away from it every day and when it's not operating anymore aren't the ones looking at a huge waste pile and other mine mess. Others have indicated that this will hurt tourism to Rylstone/Kandos and Mudgee as there has been a lot spent on promoting the area and if this project is approved it will be for nothing.

I on behalf of WWWAC and all Aboriginal Stakeholders urge the Independent Planning Commission to take into full consideration the written submissions and of what the concerned speakers, the actual residents of Lue have had to say during the entirety of the public hearing.

WWWAC look forward to further participating in the above project, sharing our knowledge of county and to ensure our Heritage is protected. We trust our response meets your requirements. Please contact WWWAC Directors should you require our assistance to address any Aboriginal issues to support your future plans.

Regards

Bradley R. Bliss J.P.  
WWWAC CEO and Contact Officer  
Senior Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Field Officer  
Senior Aboriginal Cultural Mentor and Educator  
Traditional Owner Clan Descendant