

Submission of Objection to Bowden's Silver Mine Project at Lue

Having read the various papers/documents concerning this project and listening to the presentations at the Hearing I am even more convinced that there are many reasons why this project should not go ahead, in any form. (I will attach a copy of my presentation.)

I am writing this submission of objection as a member of Mid-Western Regional Shire and resident of Mudgee town.

My professional background is in Early Childhood Education. I specialised in integrating children with disabilities into mainstream preschools in Sydney for 18 years. When I moved to Mudgee in 1984, I obtained a position in TAFE teaching Adult Literacy and Numeracy and Labour Market Programs for long term unemployed. In 1990 I became the first Community Support Worker in the newly formed Developmental Disability Service. Since then, I have worked locally and regionally in a variety of positions. After retirement, continuing to interact with people living with a disability, their families and support networks in this rural community has deepened my understanding and appreciation of the social values that provide the rich quality of life experienced in Midwestern Regional Council area and especially in the small rural communities.

Negative Social Impacts will be extensive should the project proceed. This will be my primary focus in this submission.

Mining destroys small rural communities.

I am very concerned that for the residents of Lue and surrounding rural properties that their way of life will be destroyed.

We have witnessed the loss of Wollar, Bylong and Ulan, vibrant communities providing services and social support to their residents and surrounding rural properties. Mudgee town dwellers and visitors to the region have also benefitted socially from these communities. Now they are no longer in existence.

Lue village and surrounds will not survive should this Silver Mine go ahead. Air Pollution, Noise, Loss of Water Quality and Security, Toxic Waste leaching into the ground water, destruction of the Visual Amenity, Biodiversity loss, Increased Traffic and the worst of all - the dangerous exposure to Lead, will make it impossible to continue to live in the village and nearby rural properties. The village will die! Lue families and the broader community will lose an important aspect to the ambience and amenity of country living.

As an educationalist/support worker interacting with children who do not cope with the large schools in Mudgee town, I have known many who, after transferring to the small schools, have progressed and grown to be well adjusted and successful adults. Lue village school has always had an excellent reputation of providing quality education for all the children and especially those with special needs. No parent will send their child with learning challenges to a school covered in Lead Dust. No matter what the company says history shows that this is a valid concern. Lue school will, like Ulan and Wollar schools, close. Another important community asset will no longer exist should this mine go ahead.

In my extensive work with families in the shire I have witnessed the Mental and Physical Health impacts on entire families when mining disrupts their communities. These are universally profound. Adults experience deep depression, anxiety, grief and anger which can lead to an increase in physical illness, relationship breakdown, family violence, employment challenges and alcohol /drug and

gambling addictions. Children suffer from the loss of the rural way of life and the flow on effect of these mental health and physical impacts both from within their families and for themselves.

The various service providers in Mudgee are currently unable to respond effectively to our communities existing needs. I am concerned for the families of Lue and extended community. We do not have the extra resources to help them through the anxiety and stress they and their extended families will experience if this mine goes ahead. The social impacts of anxiety and stress at this level impacts negatively on the whole community: educational facilities, health services, housing, police and disability providers.

The known dangerous impacts of LEAD

This will further raise anxiety levels. Our broader community will experience this extra stress if this project goes ahead. Not just in Lue village but also as residents along the Lawson creek and in Mudgee town become increasingly aware of the risk of Lead in dust and water ways. Local young people have expressed to me that they are considering moving away from the Mudgee region if this mine goes ahead as they are concerned about the long-term risks of lead.

Stress that contributes to the increase in mental and other health issues will be experienced due to the following:

1. Life style changes due to the risk of lead being carried in dust storms and toxic waste in water ways will be experienced in Lue village and in surrounding areas. Families, who currently enjoy a rural lifestyle, will have to keep their windows closed and rely on expensive air-conditioning. This will replace our rural experience of utilising the natural flow of fresh air, a value country people appreciate. We will not be able to enjoy home grown food/milk nor hang out wet clothes in the sun to dry. Our children will not be able to play freely outside or have pets.
2. We will have to be diligent to protect our family members from the exposure to Lead so they do not experience decreased academic and cognitive abilities, delayed puberty, kidney function, increased blood pressure reduced foetal growth and premature birth. An impossible task! History proves this concern is valid. How far will the lead dust and toxic water spread? This is unknown but proves a long-term risk to Mudgee residents as well as Lue.
3. Mudgee (known as the Nest in the Hills) has a proven inversion effect problem already. Many years ago, one of our local GP's noted an increase in children experiencing Asthma. Research was conducted and it was found that when the grape vines were sprayed this drifted into the town. The cloud of chemicals affected the air quality and our health for a long period of time. Measures were introduced to stop the spray drift by banning spraying on windy days. We know that dust can travel for long distances. This poisonous Lead dust will eventually arrive and over time will build up in the soil and water should this mine proceed.
4. Another stress for our families will be the constant monitoring of Lead in our blood, water tanks, creeks and soil. Who will bear the cost of this? Who will provide this service? Who will ensure this is universally available? What can be done when unacceptable Lead levels are documented? The health impacts will be irreversible.
5. From an economic perspective this mine will cause many negative outcomes. Our entire region will experience widespread loss of business when olive groves, vineyards, sheep and cattle enterprises have to shut down due to the impacts of toxicity produced by this project. Added to this will be the loss of the wide range of jobs associated with the tourist industry.

6. Property values in Lue and surrounding areas will immediately devalue if the mine is approved. Putting pressure on the families needing to relocate as well as the housing market in Mudgee. Eventually the effects of lead and other toxic waste will impact on the town of Mudgee and surrounding rural enterprises causing house prices to tumble. Families will not be able to afford to move away from all the pollution and health risks. What a bleak future for future generations!
7. The small number of people employed by the mine does not outweigh the loss of jobs and economic benefits these businesses bring to the region. The only people who profit over the long term are the big business owners not local communities
8. Currently Midwestern Regional Shire also benefits economically from the huge influx of visitors attending foot ball games at Glen Willow sporting grounds. This facility has been built on the traditional flood plane where Lawson Creek reaches the town of Mudgee. Recently we had a Rain event that caused the playing fields to be completely covered by water primarily from the Lawson creek and its catchment. Should this mine go ahead there will be leakage from the toxic waste tailings dam as predicted in Bowden's EIS. Climate change will ensure that there will be damaging rain events. There is a distinct probability that the toxic waste will eventually make it way into the Lawson Creek and eventually into the ground water just under the surface of Glen Willow. Will the lead and other toxic waste make it unsafe for games to continue to be held there? This pollution of water ways has happened near other mines producing Lead waste! Even though this may a long-term risk is it worth the loss of income?
9. The direct social impacts of the risk to our children playing on contaminated ground will have widespread negative outcomes. As a great Grandmother I care about the health of the future generations of our children and hope they never are exposed to this danger.
10. The value of living in a region that is rated as one of the top tourist destinations is not just from an economic point of view. The rural and natural environment provide great health benefits. These positive impacts are experienced not just for locals but for the many visitors who come to enjoy fresh air, clean water, scenic landscapes and the native flora and fauna. Take these away and those health benefits will be lost far and wide.

In conclusion, I am concerned in regard to the short- and long-term negative social effects Bowden's Silver Mine would have on my community. Five generations of my family have benefitted from living in Mudgee town and on rural properties and enjoying the country values this environment offers to our quality of life and subsequent health. This mine if it goes ahead will in a short period destroy completely the healthy family life styles of Lue residents and those on surrounding rural properties. The area will be a wasteland. The toxic waste will spread over a longer period downstream and eventually to Mudgee town and further down the Cudgegong River reaching Berending Dam. Associated with this toxicity will be the destruction of the environment and our way of life increasing health risks and the devastating effects of social disruption.

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