

To the commissioner's

We had to fight off two coal exploration attempts in our area to protect our environment, indigenous culture and our more recent history from being disconnected and destroyed forever. Whether we are aboriginal or part of that large group of displacement people from other parts of the world over two hundred years ago, we are all indigenous to this area, if not we are indigenous to this whole planet because we are all connected in some way. It's the health of the soil that sustains our life.

My ancestors settled here in the early 1800s and have contributed to this community's success. As a directly affected community member I went to the hearing objecting to the proposed mine and after being there for the three days of the IPC hearing it only confirmed my view that the mine should not be approved in its current approval form.

It became clear through the research funded and completed by the community presented to you on all subject matters over the three days that the EIS completed by the proponent was unsound, incomplete, misrepresented and inaccurate. In the areas of water, unproven mining techniques, inadequate infrastructure to prevent spillage and overflow from Tailings on site, geological information showing a fault line under the tailing dams, storage and encapsulated waste rock (AMD) and the dust suppression methods are inadequate to prevent any of the pollutants from leaving the site.

I have read a report recently that talks about the rehabilitation costs are grossly neglected and underfunded

(An excerpt from the article)

The stakes are high in Australia's mining clean up boom. The Australian public stands to incur billions of dollars in rehabilitation costs through either use of taxpayer funds or a degraded environment if rehabilitation is not well managed and regulated. This would represent a huge subsidy to the mining industry. The large number of historical and modern abandoned mines compared with the handful of fully rehabilitated sites shows that the mining industry does not have a good record at cleaning up after itself.

*Little data is available to the public on the clean-up from the mining boom. State government agencies often lack basic information on how many mines are in operation, with still less published on closures and abandonments. **The Australia Institute – The Dark Side Of The Boom 2017***

This mine has no rehabilitation plans and whatever disaster happens during or after the closing of the mine the damage is forever. Ongoing death or chronic illness to humans and the death in our waterways is forever. FOREVER

All the personal testimonies expressed over the three days being concerns for families mental, physical and financial health has not been seriously addressed and considered. If what was presented by the proponent was best practices, this is not good enough. The bar is too low.

If one child is harmed or anyone person suffers a chronic illness from this mine it is unacceptable. A death from this operation now or in the future should be considered as gross negligence. Most other industries regard this kind of negligence to protect workers and public safety and as a criminal offence. World history shows us that human and environmental damage is inevitable from this type of mining.

These best practices criteria and its outcomes do not take into consideration seriously enough for the existing land use, almost 200 years of generational enterprises where we are constantly planning for the next 200 years and beyond into the future (what will I leave behind for my grandchildren) as the stewards and custodians of the land in our lifetime.

A 16 year life expectancy of a mine versus the impact and effect on the surroundings LGA is so far out of balance and that approval of this mine will appear as a corrupt process and that the affected community is just collateral damage. A price we have to pay for improving the GDP of the country (such a small amount of royalties to be paid to taxpayers) is reckless and incomprehensible.

Any level of lead exposure according to the health industry is seen as detrimental to human health .
Why doesn't the health industry ruling and best practice expectations for mining fall inline ?
All the issues below should be guaranteed before any approval.

No dust should be allowed to leave the site.

No toxic water should be allowed to leave the site

No loss of water to the environment is acceptable

No interference to existing land use and planned use is acceptable

Complete rehabilitation of this toxic site should be funded by the proponent of this mine.

The planned monitoring and triggers that are to put into practice is not indicating any real protection to environment which is direct link to the wellbeing of human life, flora and fauna.

It's all after the fact. It's appears based on the best practice rulings in place that we can't be guaranteed of future exposure to an environmental catastrophe which will have a direct link to human health. Words like – as much as practical, responsible, feasible, monitoring, modelling, mitigation and triggers all inform us that you are not in total control. All this comes after the event and allow for human error or relaxed attitudes to be acceptable without real consequences.

Current weather conditions has proven that we can't really predict what is coming (wind and rain), with what severity and area in which it will occur. It appeared that the proponent is using floored modelling and assumptions to present a socially sensitive and environmentally considered site.

This mine is only 2km from closet town and school (innocent young kids), 20km to my town and only metres away from flora and fauna, metres away from our food source, metres away from our drinking water (all the way to Murray Darling)– no pro caution put in place can guarantee no impact. They are lying to the DPE and IPC by the miss representation of the facts presented to you . This has been proven. You can't deny the results from the research presented to you by the Lue Action Group and community .

We are all exposed to the roof top pollution, drinking water contamination, ground surface contamination (that ends in the food chain) and you can't deny it as you know of the past dust storms.

The impact just from the mine operation itself producing its own pollution in the shape of constant noise, lighting on at night , vibration and truck movements. 24hr operation will affect the mental health of the local residents and all the natural environment around (forcing animals away and disrupting nature's symbiosis).

The mining site and its pollutive impact will have a huge effect on tourism, local businesses to the whole LGA as people come here for its natural beauty, Arts, food, wineries , tranquility, it's dark star filled sky, country lifestyle and community atmosphere. Experts suggest that fine lead particles may be problematic to more than 60km and contaminating everything. Lead particulates from Australia have been found in Antarctica.

We heard the closing remarks from the proponent washing over our concerns like they had it under control when clearly it has been shown not to be true.

A comment made by the proponent based on census results of the Kandos and Rylstone area is insinuating that the community is lacking or suffering. I disagree. I live in this area and I'm proud of the community that has transitioned after the mine closures , without government assistance. People in community struggled but found a way through it. It is now vibrant community with a huge amount of talent and a respect for its passed history. Artist's in the area, represent indigenous culture, modern arts, present regular art installations and exhibitions. We have a broad rage of small business types that thrive on locals and tourism for their income. Most recent small business over year or two are the Barber shop, Motor bike shop, indigenous art and modern craft, Italian pizza restaurant , gift shops, cafes and op shops to name a few. We have our major street events every year and our agricultural show that honours our farming history.

We also have a legacy of poor health to some degree because of our mining history. The community is healthier now for not having a mine close. If you want a mine job you can easily find one.

We were also told that it is a low income area, for some it's a choice, a lifestyle change where they are not chasing high incomes and for other this won't change no matter how many jobs there are. For some lifestyle is more important than money, no one has thought to consider as to whether they are happy with what they have. There was an insertion that the community has a low level of education. There are lot successful people now and in our passed where education wasn't a prerequisite to there success.

So if they just look at the census raw data only, it's another example of poor due diligence, local engagement and where social impacts are not being properly assessed.

The current geological mapping of the site shows that the mine site is over a fault line. Given all the history of mining around the world shown by experts you cannot stop water from moving through cracks in the substrate. So with Acid Mine Drainage being the second biggest environmental disaster next to Climate Change the experts have already considered the action to be taken by Bowden to mitigate is considered inadequate on this mine site. The experts have not being able to show any successful examples of this method being used. Once again this advice has been ignored. You will not be able to stop gravity from moving moisture through the substrate destroying the waterways all the way to Mudgee and beyond destroying farmland and agricultural businesses forever.

The open cut pit is left open to the atmosphere forever as a terminal groundwater sink becoming more and more concentrated and toxic working it's way through the water table.

Your experts have noted that "if unmitigated, there would be more than 50% chance that the water level could increase above level required for the pit to become a through flow system". The example of the current rainfall events of 200mm, this would have caused a disaster, an overflow event. Your experts also say that to "increase final void footprint by up to 28ha (52% increase), moving an additional 16.3 million cubic metres of rock. At \$3- \$4 /cubic metres would be an additional closure cost of \$49M - \$65M A closure increase cost of 224% and 265%". It appears that the DPE has not acknowledged its own advice.

You can't guarantee that the linings used on this site to either cover or encapsulated won't be compromised during installation particularly due to its thickness, because not even your experts can guarantee it's success. Another example of ignored advice.

One of most important concerning issues is water. It has been proven that this site is not viable without an external source of water. Over 950 mega litres of water to be taken out of downstream flows for use in the mine. The EIS has been misrepresented on the figures of water requirements and it affect on the existing community. Our experts are showing that there modelling is incorrect and the accurate advice being shown by the experts is been ignored. There expectation on requirements is unrealistic and are still admitting that they may need more in dry times.

The shear act of mining has proven to disrupt and fractures rock in surrounding landscape allowing for water or acid to drain without control. Mining breaches in these areas have proven to no more than a slap on the wrist, small fine. It is not humanly possible to fix the damage once the is done The virtual complete extraction of the water will decimate the downstream agricultural enterprises, drinking water for thousands of people and animal, critical Ecco systems and livestock survival. I'm aware of Bowdens pledge to supply the short fall. But without steps or processes in place it will be to little to late.

As a community we can't comprehend what is happening and that another person could do this to another family, for the government to have allowed it to proceed this far in the process without all the completed assessments. It appears to have stepped over all these issues.

The NSW government resources grants program has been funding companies like Bowdens (a successful grants applicant more than once) to help with there exploration costs.

Why isn't the government offering money to the community to help us with its research and data collection to support their outcomes. The government has forgotten that they are our public servants and that there first priority is to the people it represents.

Based on the low level of Best Practices allowed and fact that we have uncovered a poor EIS for them, why aren't we better supported. If people were given a more accurate assessment of the risks and benefits this mine would never be allowed as it stands. The risk is to high.

When does the cost on human life and on nature taken seriously.

While ever people think they can dominate nature and extract from it with out consequences, you are delusional – the current climate situation is evident of this breakdown

Nature will go on and survive without us , but we can't survive without nature

I hope when you make a decision you look at your family and consider whether you can do it to them and there future. This is what we're faced with.

Kind regards

Michael Nielsen