

NSW Independent Planning Commission
Suite 15.02, 135 King Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Commissioners,

Re: Bowdens Silver Project - SSD 5765

I am writing this submission in full support of the Bowdens Silver Project.

For the record and transparency, I am currently employed as the Community Liaison Officer by Bowdens Silver and have been in that role since August 2016. At the outset, I'd like to confirm that this is a personal submission separate to any previous correspondence or presentations delivered as part of my professional role.

I am in the unique position of being a local community member and also heavily involved in community matters as part of my employment. Therefore, I feel I can comment on a range of matters that demonstrate wide community acceptance of the Project and also a personal view on positive social benefits that the Project will provide across the Mid-Western Region.

My family have been in the Mudgee region for close to 40 years. My wife and I are raising a family here, my brother and his wife are raising their family here and my wife's sister and husband likewise. In the first years of my employment at Bowdens Silver, extended family members lived on Lue Road in the heart of the Lue village. I state this as I believe that my connection to the region and the Project have allowed me to form a holistic and informed view of the benefits this development can provide for our area.

I have had the opportunity and pleasure to talk to many, many people in the last 6.5 years. Throughout that time, I have formed relationships across the entire demographic range within our community. At times, discussions have been robust and forthright but even after discussions with differing points of view, mutual respect has meant that people have often approached me confidentially to ask questions or seek information. In essence, I have heard the entire range of questions and opinions about the Project. Those opinions have not always been supportive but have given valuable insight into valid concerns that ultimately come back to a particular person's interests from a family, financial or environmental perspective. Rightly, these are the issues that drive our daily lives and provide peace of mind.

Without rehashing the extensive community consultation activities that have occurred and already been presented, what has not been captured or assessed over the past 6.5 years are the countless positive interactions that I have had with family, friends and the multitude of strangers who see my work uniform and stop me in the street, at the supermarket or when I'm visiting a local business and tell me how good this development will be for them and the towns we live in. These are everyday people who live in the region, genuinely interested in their community or town and have seen the benefits that mining and associated industries can provide and want that legacy to continue hand in hand with our thriving tourism and agriculture industries. Importantly, they know that the mining industry is heavily regulated and can't happen without appropriate and enforceable management controls. In essence, the wider community has peace of mind that any perceived financial, family and environment concerns have been extensively assessed and can be managed accordingly.

Some of the benefits that I believe would be provided by an approval include but are not limited to:

- The creation of hundreds of jobs not only at the mine but also many more within the supporting industries and within the community shops and retailers. These jobs are vital to the ongoing success and/or viability of local towns and communities. The company has committed to provide preference to hire locals where possible. This has the added bonus of utilising an existing

workforce, creating opportunities and skills for locals and relieving pressure on housing supply. This would help drive the company's required workforce accommodation and local businesses and services strategies as outlined in the DPE's recommended conditions of consent. Furthermore, discussions with Council will continue to inform the workforce accommodation strategy so that it doesn't compete with the tourism industry, relieves the pressure placed by other projects in the regional pipeline and focuses economic stimulus towards the Rylstone and Kandos areas.

- Opportunities for youth to train and be employed within the mine and associated industries. This is particularly crucial for Kandos and Rylstone where a generation of youth see no future opportunities unless they leave the area. Future opportunities have the ability to keep families together. The social and economic fabric of Kandos and Rylstone has materially changed since a number of industries and employers have left the area and the Bowdens Silver Project has an opportunity to impact these towns positively.
- Positive social impacts that are not just financial. These would include the direction for future workers to live locally and for the Project not to be a FIFO site. More local residents over extended periods means more opportunities for better services to move into the area such as doctors and health providers, teachers, pre-schools, banks and Government providers. These points were raised by speakers at the Public Hearing as real and current concerns for some towns in our region.

A local, large employer in a diversified industry can help provide a level of social resilience to allow for natural growth of skills, employment and business to occur. Economic, tourism, agricultural and employment cycles will naturally wax and wane over time, so the importance of a long-term industry provider through a new mine creates and provides stability and opportunities at the same time. Ultimately, local people can create long term plans to prosper.

Family pressures can be alleviated by the opportunities provided to workers (both young and old) to work close to their homes. Young people won't have to move away for work, parents won't need to find extra money to support children living away, reduced travel times to work allow for more family time and community participation and opportunities will be available for agricultural workers to earn off-farm incomes and strengthen their own businesses.

I could write reams of information on the technical and social merits of the Bowdens Silver Project but would like to circle back to my personal views as a community member who has gained an enormous amount of knowledge about this proposal. In particular, I'd like to look through the lenses of those that I have spoken to over time and touch on those points that I raised previously - family, financial and environmental.

The Bowdens Silver Project has already provided me with family, financial and environmental peace of mind. I am living the social benefits a project like this can bring such as providing stable income to buy a house locally, allow my wife to work part-time in order to parent our child, utilise local businesses and services such as child care and community groups, work close to home without the need for extensive travel which provides family and social time and work in an industry that is arguably the most environmentally regulated and monitored in the country. That gives me comfort that my family and other families in the region can be assured of a project that cannot (and rightly so) leave a legacy that is not in the interests of generations to come. I fully believe that others in our community should also be given the opportunity to experience the same benefits that I have from the Bowdens Silver Project. If given the opportunity, our community will ultimately be stronger because of it and I urge you to approve the mine in line with DPE's recommendations.