

Tony Goninon & Kristina White



Mount Knowles NSW 2850

Friday 24th February 2023

Independent Planning Commission,
NSW Government

Dear Independent Planning Commission,

Re: Bowdens Silver

Application Number: SSD-5765

EPBC ID Number: 2018/8372

Assessment Type: State Significant Development

Development Type: Minerals Mining

LGA: Mid-Western Regional

We strongly object and are opposed to the proposed Bowdens Silver mine at Lue as detailed in the submitted documents.

Our issues with the proposal, objections and comments, in no particular order, are as follows:

- Conditions of Consent are not adequate and weak and do not fully consider development on all affected residents/owners.
 - Hours of Operation of mining operation of 24/7 for the 15.5yrs of mine operation is unacceptable. This is not a remote isolated location for a minor development works/activity. Noise, dust, light and traffic will have significant long-term impact on adjacent Lue village residents, properties along Lue Rd and Mudgee from mine operation and other activities.
 - Blasting up to 5/week during mine operation will cause noise and distress for nearby residents. Storage and daily transport of explosives to site is dangerous given existing road conditions.
 - Lue Rd condition and road design with broken edges, narrow bridges, curves, unmarked edges, no shoulders, overgrown roadside vegetation and wildlife, as acknowledged by the applicant, is not considered safe for daily transport of explosive materials.

- Where is details of Social Impact Management Plan. What community measures and programs will be provided. Specifically for the immediate and nearby local residents and owners not to be used elsewhere in LGA determined by Councilors.
 - Proposed Road Maintenance planning agreement for approx. \$110k/year for Lue Rd is considered totally inadequate for the 15.5yrs of the project. Lue Rd is not designed or have any asset life for the proposed increase in heavy vehicle traffic volumes from the project. The road needs upgrading not maintenance. The road geometry, narrow widths, curves, narrow bridges and road shoulders need to be upgraded and redesigned for the increase in traffic volumes and heavy vehicle movements for the safety of all users and the asset owners/ratepayers.
 - Details of any Community Infrastructure and Programs need to be provided i.e. what, where and who, and need to be for immediate and nearby Lue residents and those directly impacted by project. Not for facilities at other ends of LGA. Will these become an ongoing liability for Council to maintain or operate?
- Aboriginal Heritage items will be removed, discovered or destroyed during establishment and construction of site works. Need full cooperation and carrying out of works by or under direct supervision of Local Aboriginal Land Council staff to protect, recover and record any items. The loss or destruction is not acceptable. Fines and penalties are too low given the mine proposals profits and will never replace these items/history and importance to the aboriginal community. Proposal indicates known artefacts and items are considered of High Significance. Comments in proposal from Heritage Consultants from Victoria saying the items are of low scientific or aboriginal value are dismissive and culturally insensitive. The use of a local or even NSW Aboriginal Heritage Consultant may be more aware of local issues, history, stories and communities.
- Proposal is for at least 15.5yrs mine operation and 7yrs rehabilitation. Mine will setup, extract its profit than leave the site, Lue and Mudgee region. What guarantee, damage deposit or bonds will be held over the company to carry out works as per any approval and importantly the rehabilitation of site. Bonds are always totally inadequate for predicted future works/costs; a percentage of revenue/profit should be set aside annually to ensure funding is available should the application proceed. Will the company structure exist in 15.5yrs to do this? If the company falls over or disappears the local community will be left with a long-term mess and bill.
- Tailing dam of approx. 50m height (14 storey high) is a significant change to the local topography and impact on natural watercourses. The area of approx. 117ha of flooded land will destroy natural vegetation, habitat and farming lands, leading to large negative environmental impact.
- Proposed Heavy Vehicle traffic movements for mine operation and transport of concentrates on surrounding Local roads is too high and will impact the amenity of nearby residents and safety of other users of the roads. Up to 6 Heavy Vehicles (B Doubles) daily,

Monday to Saturday. Damage to and loss of asset life of Lue Rd. Safety of users of Lue Rd given existing narrow widths, curves, unformed shoulders, lack of markings. Impact and safety of heavy-laden B Double trucks exiting site onto Lue Rd. Lue Rd speed limit is 100km/hr. Multiple times a day B Double trucks fully laden driving at 100km/hr on Lue Rd is not safe or designed for this. This does not include all the other mine site vehicles which will also impact the safety and increase traffic volumes on Lue Rd.

- Impacts to the groundwater is major concern. Proposed 3.5ML/day will impact other users. Existing farming communities rely on bores for water source for crops and animals. Will the mine cease operation during drought periods to allow groundwater to recover and sustainable. Let alone possible contamination of groundwaters.
- Reductions to Hawkins and Lawsons Creek flows will impact downstream users and degrade the environmental health/flows of the creek. The applicant indicates that Lawson Creek is intermittent and periodically flows, not the case from local knowledge.
- Night glow from 24/7 mine operation will be seen nearby and affect the dark sky environment of this area. Note the concern to consider the distant Sidings Springs Observatory. What about local residents/visitors? What about Mudgee Observatory impacts?
- Removal and destruction of approx. 380Ha of native vegetation including threatened flora and fauna species. Offset strategies are a way for developers to pay to destroy existing native vegetation. The impact and loss of already small remnant vegetation and habitats will increase the stress to wildlife leading to their isolation and disappearance another significant environment impact.
- Predicted increase to traffic from mine site of 22% daily increase. This is unsafe and will have major impact to Lue Rd residents/properties/users. The road will need upgrading to suitable standard not a band aid maintenance fix. Road widths, shoulders, markings, bridge widenings will need to be upgraded.
- This will increase traffic noise and at night the impact of headlights along Lue Rd.
- The 24/7 mine operation will impact residents all day and night. Lue Rd is already littered daily with fresh dead native animals; expect roadkill's will now increase by more than 22% .
- There are no alternative native animal corridors or crossing points to reduce roadkill. Have witnessed koalas in trees next to Lue Rd on our property.
- Provision of parking on site for mine workers will make the offer of a bus to transport them to site self-defeating. Especially when they are working shift work at night. Expect also an increase in 85% speed profile for Lue Rd
- The processing of ore on site and use of many chemical reagents including Sodium Cyanide will potentially contaminate/poison the groundwaters and downstream creeks given the mine operations 15.5yr lifespan. Accidents will happen on site, tailing dams fail, chemical storage facilities, liners decay or from leachate seepage. Will mine company come back in future to fix or compensate affected landowners, communities or environment.

- The TSF dam is considered below the level and capacity it should be designed for. The designed 100yr ARI is too low given that it is for holding contaminated waters and tailings. The recent flooding events in October 2022 that impacted Mudgee region including Lawson Creek/Lue Rd need to be fully considered in any hydraulic modelling of the catchment and dam design. Lue Rd was closed and covered in several location. Lawson Creek overtopped the banks along its length and to levels and flows not historically seen. Causing extensive property, livestock and environmental damage. Given that with climate change and accepted predicted increases in storm occurrence and rainfall intensity that the current modelled 100yr AARI is inadequate.
- The TSF design with bituminous liner and 40m deep grout wall is still expected to be pervious with seepage of 160m³/day. This is contaminated waters entering groundwater and downstream waterflows. Long term and build up of contamination for downstream users and ecosystems, which will significantly impact the environment and livelihoods.
- The WER to store forever 26.6Mt of PAF. Liners degrade over time and will eventually allow potential acid forming contaminants to enter downstream surface and groundwaters. Who will monitor and carry out repairs once mine closes and rehab “done”?
- Hours of operation and night shifts 24/7 operation will change the rural small village country lifestyle of area. Increase in vehicles at all hours of day, noise will carry further at night.
- How are we guaranteed there wont be expansion of mine site, operations and its lifespan in the future or if ore prices change the site is mothballed?
- When does mine ore extraction phase finish and site rehabilitation works start?
- Is there a maintenance period for plant/vegetation establishment after the rehabilitation phase finishes.

Yours Faithfully,

Tony Goninon & Kris White