

Objection to the Bowden's Mine Project at Lue

Visitation to the Mid-Western Regional Council area (MWRC) and its visitor economy are at serious risk from the proposed Bowden's' mine.

This submission is being lodged in response to the planning proposal as the proposal has overlooked a key consideration in its assessment, and one which not possibly be taken seriously given this deficiency.

The proposal fails to assess the critical economic impact of the mine. To exclude any meaningful mention or exploration of the value of the economy at large, including the visitor economy in this region when considering the strategic context of the project is misleading.

Consideration for the assessment of the application has failed to address, or account for the MWRC economy, and specifically the tourism industry /visitor economy. This valuable economic driver for the local region was not included *in the critical assessment criteria* in the Department of Planning Development Assessment of the Bowden's Mine. This a chronic oversight. It's not possible to present a business case which lacks relevant data and statistics to support a case for viability at a minimum, and sustainably as best practice.

There is no mention, nor assessment, indeed any type economic impact to the MWRC visitor economy.

It is silent on the net benefit/cost + the MUCH larger number of jobs at risk from negative impacts on tourism + agriculture.

The report by the Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) overlooks this vital issue and some powerful , important and relevant supporting statistics in its 'Key Assessment issues'.

A report commissioned to support this submission clearly articulates this and it provides evidence in the form of accurate data and statistics to substantiate it.

Obeeyond the impact on this project and the mining sector to consider the much larger number of jobs at risk from negative impacts on other industries, most obviously tourism and agriculture. In addition, other mining projects in the area are at risk from a possible community backlash against mining if the proposed Bowden mine, as expected to produce an average of 5100 tonnes of lead, 6900 tonnes of zinc and 3.4 million ounces of silver per annum, produces major environmental problems.

(<https://www.silvermines.com.au/projects/bowdens-silver-project/> (2023) This website quotes the project Feasibility Study estimates of annual average production of these outputs)

Attachment 1: Karl Flowers, Decisive Consulting Report : MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA VISITATION AND ECONOMY AT RISK FROM PROPOSED BOWDENS MINE IMPACTS ON THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

The Mid-Western Regional Council website information about the visitor economy states that in 2016-19 averages: this area "attracts over 691,000 visitors each year to experience the incredible local wine, food, heritage and natural scenery."

<https://www.midwestern.nsw.gov.au/Business/About-the-Region>)

These visitors generated annual visitor spending of \$200 million in his area over these four years. And visitation numbers have increased by as staggering 19.5%, as in 2020 2021 there were an estimated 826,000 visitors to the Mudgee Region.

Tourism Research Australia (2023) Data source Tourism Research Australia (TRA) using National Visitor Survey results for 2020-21. Karl Flowers, Decisive Consulting Report : MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL

AREA VISITATION AND ECONOMY AT RISK FROM PROPOSED BOWDENS MINE IMPACTS ON THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

The Visitor Economy Explained

Tourism is now described by the state government as the visitor economy because it's big business. The visitor economy encompasses the direct and indirect contributions to the economy, it is 'everyone's' business resulting from a person (a visitor) travelling outside their normal place of residence, meaning that businesses benefit from this industry.

At the state level the NSW visitor economy supports:

- 107,115 businesses
- 296,000 jobs
- In 2018/19, the visitor economy contributed \$38 billion (6 per cent) to NSW Gross State Product (GSP).

Tourism is one of the 7 engine industries expected to drive the economy of Regional NSW – not anticipated: expected by the state government.

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\$7 billion
Contribution to NSW Gross Regional Product (GRP)

In NSW, the visitor economy supports more than 107,115 businesses and over 296,000 jobs. It is the state's fifth largest employment group, accounting for approximately seven per cent of total jobs. In 2018/19, the visitor economy contributed \$38 billion (6 per cent) to NSW Gross State Product (GSP).

The activity of the visitor economy provides direct revenue for businesses in NSW, and tax revenue for governments to spend on services for the community. The community also benefits through job creation, investment in public amenities and services, and lifestyle enhancements. The visitor economy not only sustains existing businesses, it also creates new businesses and population growth, and supports cultural activities and the arts.

The visitor economy is the lifeblood of many regional communities, contributing \$7 billion to NSW Gross Regional Product (GRP).

The visitor economy is a major source of income for many – particularly for women and young people who make up a significant proportion of the workforce. Visitors, especially in the business and scientific communities, add intellectual capital to the state, which enhances our ability to thrive in other sectors of the economy.

The economic benefits of the visitor economy to NSW is clear, but it is also important to highlight the social benefit delivered through a vibrant visitor sector. Positive travel experiences and connections with community are important contributors to social wellbeing, as are the shared experiences that come with entertainment, hospitality and events from sporting to cultural.

The visitor economy of NSW is not owned by any one stakeholder or business sector. It is co-owned and curated by a range of stakeholders including visitors, businesses, governments, residents, hosts and the community. Only when all these stakeholders work together can the potential of the visitor economy be fully realised.



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The visitor economy is everyone's business

Visitors come to NSW for many reasons: to holiday; visit family and friends; to attend an event; experience arts and culture; to study or learn; to participate in sport, entertainment, employment, business meetings; for presentations and conferences and work incentives or rewards; for shopping or health purposes.

The visitor economy benefits many industry sectors

Planes, trains, marine transport, car hire, taxi, coach and bus services, roads, airports, wharves, cruise terminals, transport hubs, event studios, venues and facilities...

Events from major to local festivals, from conferences to sport. Attractions across the range of experiences. Services such as travel agents, visitor information centres, local and state governments and financial institutions.

Accommodation from major chains to short term rentals, restaurants and cafes from 5-star to the corner coffee shop. Shops from luxury brands and centres to the local grocer. Educational institutions from universities, schools, colleges to private learning centres. Health from dental medical facilities to wellness and wellbeing businesses. Workspaces and businesses that employ visitors or otherwise service their needs.

Outback Astronomy, Broken Hill

NSW VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY 2030

(Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 p. 14-15) <https://www.destinationnsw.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/nsw-ves-2030.pdf>

The visitor economy is central to the NSW Government's economic plans. It is now a government imperative that all regional and local tourism plans are prepared to align to the objectives and the targets in this Visitor Economy Strategy, which on page 16 states:

“Visitor Economy Strategy - Strategic Context

The importance of the visitor economy is highlighted in a number of NSW Government strategies and plans, as follows, as well as the plans of many local governments state-wide.

- › *Global NSW Strategy*
- › *20-Year Economic Vision for Regional NSW*
- › *The Greater Sydney Region Plan: A Metropolis of Three Cities*
- › *24-Hour Economy Strategy*
- › *NSW Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038*
- › *Future Transport Strategy 2056* › *Smart Places Strategy*
- › *Study NSW International Education Strategy*

The NSW Government has outlined its vision for the visitor economy in two consecutive Visitor Economy Industry Action Plans – one for the period to 2020 and a subsequent plan to 2030. The Planning Department report does not refer to one of these documents, so how can the impact of such an important industry, and a set of important State Plans be overlooked?

The Assessment Report mentions the word tourism only three times over 115 pages. As in 3 single words: no commentary, no analysis and no supporting empirical data.

It is staggering that credible that the Visitor Economy Strategy is not considered when assessing this mine, given this plan provides a roadmap to support industries involved in the visitor economy to recover from the impact of drought, bushfires and COVID-19 and to grow in the future.”

‘Revitalising the state’s visitor economy will require strong leadership from the NSW Government. This new strategy articulates how the Government will lead the coordinated response to today’s challenges and drive visitor economy growth into the future.’ (VES page 16.)

At the Regional Level, the Central NSW visitor economy supports

At the Year ending December 2021, the Central NSW Economy, in which Mudgee Region is included:

- 2,254 tourism businesses
- 5.2 million visitors
- 6.3 million visitor nights
- \$1.35 billion visitor expenditure
- 1.7 million domestic overnight visitors
- 2.3 million domestic overnight visitors
- 2.9 million domestic daytrip visitors
- 33,800 international visitors (YE December 2021)

Central NSW Destination Management Plan 2022 – 2030 (page 19)
https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/0cb38578-a5fb-498c-bc5d-a9978c222252/downloads/DNCW%20Destination%20Management%20Plan%202022-2030_200.pdf?ver=1677024338028

Mudgee Region Tourism Destination Management Plan 2020 – 2025 (DMP) is one example of a local tourism plan in NSW which has been prepared in line with the NSW VES , and with same intent to help build the visitor economy in regional NSW.

Mudgee DMP states” Importantly, we are committed to creating a plan for the future of our visitor economy for the whole region, from Gulgong to Kandos, Rylstone, Mudgee and our beautiful rural villages. Through continued collaboration, we will be able to further grow the appeal of our region, create more reasons to visit and encourage more people to stay longer’ (DMP p 1). Mudgee Region Destination Management Plan is appended as Attachment 3.

‘At its heart, this Destination Management Plan is about setting the pathway to grow the visitor economy of the Mudgee Region from 2020 to 2025 in a sustainable and responsive way. Our plan for the future is guided by both the values and ambition of our community and businesses. ‘ (Mudgee Region DMP page 3)

Locally in Mid Western Region, the visitor economy supports:

- 931 jobs directly due to visitor spending in 2020-21
- 21 times the number jobs in metal mining and 6 times the jobs in mining other than coal mining.
- Total number of visitor nights 948,000 (2015-2018)
- Average stay – 2 nights
- Total visitors spent - \$170 million
- Average spend - per trip \$260 per person
- 26% increase in annual visitor numbers over the last five years (Tourism Research Australia)
- an equivalent additional \$39M annually toward the visitor economy (MRTI DMP p 4-5).

Mudgee region attracted 826,000 visitors in 2020—2021. Over the last 4 years, these visitors are investing \$200 million every year into the Mudgee Region. This is a massive 26% increase in annual visitor numbers over the last five years (Tourism Research Australia), an equivalent additional \$39M annually toward the visitor economy as stated in Mudgee Region DMP.

To exclude any meaningful mention or exploration of the role tourism and the visitor economy, nor its economic impacts in the MWRC when considering the strategic context of the project is misleading. Even if this project had a 10% negative impact on tourism, that could be 93 jobs lost forever.

Visitors are coming to the Mudgee region for wine (42%), to eat out (66%), 21% bushwalk and now according to the DMP states:

‘Nature and the region’s wildlife, from birdwatching to kayaking at Ganguddy (Dunns Swamp) and walks in the Wollemi National Park, to name but a few. It also includes nature-based art trails, such as the Lawson Park Sculpture Walk in Mudgee as well as across multiple sites in Rylstone and Kandos.’

The latest Mudgee Region Destination Management Plan 2020-2025 specifically addresses wellness tourism, identifying it as one of five primary experience themes. Wellness tourism is

a growing sector globally, integrating sustainability as much as it does human health and wellbeing.

How's that going to work with lead dust, trucks on roads and a shortage of water for locals, let alone high spending visitors.

There is an obvious conflict between attracting tourists interested in high-quality local wine and food and/or having a wellness focus and the risks of lead mining, including lead poisoning and acid toxicity.

Karl Flowers, Decisive Consulting Report : MID-WESTERN REGIONAL COUNCIL AREA VISITATION AND ECONOMY AT RISK FROM PROPOSED BOWDENS MINE IMPACTS ON THE LOCAL TOURISM INDUSTRY

The Mudgee Region is recovering from a disruption in 2020 to the visitor economy which was unprecedented. The impacts of travel restrictions, numerous lockdowns and the immediate halt to people movement, increased health & safety concerns exacerbated the issue. The economic impact was ugly: at the end of 2021, there was a 32% downturn on the pre covid numbers. [Tourism Research Australia, Tourism Investment Monitor 2019-20. Australian tourism investment and COVID-19 impacts](#)

At this point in time, Mid-Western Regional Council and Mudgee Region Tourism moved fast, invested financially to implement actions to keep the Mudgee Region brand and top of mind and managed to nimbly survive this serious economic downturn.

Mudgee has won the hearts of hundreds of thousands of Australians who have voted it 'Top Tourism Town' – not once, but twice.

As quoted in a 2022 edition of Australian Traveller magazine: *"NSW's burgeoning food and wine hub of Mudgee has held onto its crown for Australia's top tourism town for a second year running, proving the first time was no fluke."*

<https://www.traveller.com.au/mudgee-named-australias-top-tourist-town-for-second-year-in-a-row-26e35#:~:text=New%20South%20Wales'%20burgeoning%20food,held%20in%20Canberra%20on%20Tuesday>.

That means Australians know Mudgee region as quality place to visit and live and invest. The value of that brand recognition is incredible, invaluable and the envy many many other destinations. This reputation be ignored. Nor can the irony of an investment into a Wellness Strategy to enhance the brand. The reputation of the Top Tourism Town as a place tarnished by lead poisoning, lead mining and acid mine drainage will soon be diminished forever. Will 350 financial members of Mudgee Region Tourism seek compensation for the brand damage and the loss of business as result of this mine and the risks of lead poisoned waterways. And if so, who pays?

This proposal fails to assess the critical economic impact of the mine: silent on the net benefit/cost + the MUCH larger number of jobs at risk from negative impacts on tourism + agriculture These 2 industries have underpinned and driven the local economy for decades, and are both proven to be long term, high yield and sustainable industries. It's been said that Tourism is the golden goose for the Mudgee Region. Let's not cook that goose.

The proposal must be refused.