

BOWDENS SILVER MINE

The following is my submission into the above application.

1. I am a resident of southern Victoria but I have close relatives in the district of the mine and I know how concerned they are regarding potential adverse effects of the proposal on the local community and the environment.
2. I have been a visitor to the area many times over a 50 year period and have no hesitation in saying I know it intimately.
3. I have attended an Bowdens Open Day at Lue, studied the materials, and questioned the proponent's representatives.
4. I have inspected in detail the works and lease areas and surrounds.
5. I have read through most of the EIS narrative but not studied all the background monitoring or certain appendices. I will be studying the background in more detail in the weeks ahead and will forward any relevant commentary thereafter.
5. I was employed for many years by a major Australian mining company where my role was in respect to management of several new mining ventures, all on closely-held, productive, private farm land some of which was of high conservation value (including freshwater storage lakes) - but never in proximity to a rural township - and never where lead and zinc were among the target minerals.
6. I am very much in favour of recovering Australia's mineral wealth, which is substantial and on which we are probably more dependent than ever for national prosperity. It is a fact that on a national scale our mineral wealth is still poorly defined and particularly in respect to hard rock deposits. The cost of uncovering this wealth is enormous and the risk to private capital is substantial. When a commercial mineral discovery is identified it's approval therefore warrants the most earnest consideration.
7. The proponents claim the deposit rates as the largest undeveloped silver mine in the world. There are very few silver mines as such. To the best of my knowledge silver is usually recovered on any scale in conjunction with gold.
8. Nevertheless Bowdens, if described correctly, seems a considerable resource and the proponent seems to speculate that adjacent areas may be equally prospective. Naturally Bowdens will seek to identify expansion of recoverable mineral wealth. That is a normal and sensible way to conduct operations. So it must not be lost sight of that the proposal could, effectively, be not just for a 16 year life - but indefinite or at least open-ended.
9. Therefore the best current knowledge in regard to the extent of further mineralisation is a relevant consideration with respect to this application. It might even be a ground for favourable consideration. If Bowdens is the precursor of a world-scale mineral province, then the sooner it is known about the better. Far more people could be dis-affected and though the environmental effects may still be manageable, it would be on a far different scale.
10. Whether the target minerals can be recovered commercially is also a relevant consideration with this application. Confidence should be sought for the proponent's claim concerning grade and cost of recovery, and marketing. Mining operations have the ability to present lots of adverse surprises.

11. While there is good coverage of the issues in the Bowden EIS the fundamentals are the effect on human health and effects on surface and ground waters. Lead effects are well known and the project should not proceed unless hygiene measures that ensure containment can be shown.
12. Surface waters are vital to the district and must not be violated in regard to flow or quality.
13. Groundwater quality and quantity is paramount. It must be shown that compromise of those values is not possible through the period of mining, or thereafter. The proponent should have already stated in good faith a preparedness to enter into a bond to indemnify Landowners if their licensed groundwater entitlement is disaffected by mining. It should be a condition of any approval.
14. On the above and other matters I fully support the excellent paper prepared by the Lue Action Group in which they set out a range of concerns, supported by consultant advice. Bowdens should not proceed unless it can be shown the concerns of the local population are resolved.

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