

## SARAH INGLIS

Havilah East, 2061 Lue Road, Havilah NSW 2850

### Submission

Bowdens Silver Project (Amendment Report) – Application Number SSD-5765

### **I STRONGLY OBJECT TO THE 2<sup>ND</sup> AMENDMENT TO THE BOWDENS SILVER PROJECT EIS**

I am a grazier on Lawson Creek less than six kilometres downstream from the proposed mine site and I read the Amendment with mounting horror. To date, I have never been contacted or consulted by Bowdens about the mine, yet their mine will destroy my property should it go ahead.

Bowdens claims that the new integrated water management plan and water optimisation programme will be a positive for the mine. They claim “a review of nearby agricultural land uses and proximity to mining activity, ... would have negligible to minor adverse impacts up the agricultural resources and enterprises in the region.”<sup>i</sup> As a nearby landowner, I am extremely concerned as, should this mine go ahead, my farm will not have a future.

My family has farmed this land since the 1870's, producing world class super fine wool and premium angus beef cattle. We really care for our land and want to protect it. We have invested heavily in our property, improving its pastures, and protecting its native vegetation. We have a continuing grazing strategy to ensure we maintain grass cover through all seasons, droughts included. Our property has a long frontage to Lawson Creek (3 kilometres). We've fenced stock from sensitive areas of the creek and in doing so, we've been able to stop erosion.

During wet times, immense amounts of water come down from the hills and, flows all over our property. This same will happen at Bowdens Silver Mine. If we don't maintain ground cover, our farm is subject to erosion. I query whether the Integrated Water Management and Water Optimisation Programme as outlined in the Amendment will be able to handle extreme weather events such as in February 2002 when our neighbours at Havilah received 225mls in one night in a storm.

If it were not for the Department, we would not have heard about the Amendment. Bowdens did not tell the community about the removal of the pipeline and major changes to the mine's layout. I object to Bowdens claiming they consulted with me as a nearby landowner.

In the Amendment, Bowdens states “Whilst Bowdens Silver's long-term objective it is to discharge water collected with the sediment dams to downstream environment and

assessed impacts in the *Updated Surface Water Assessment (WRM 2022)*.<sup>ii</sup>, they then go on to say water from the Erosion and Sediment Control (ERC) Zone is unsuitable for release. What does this mean? I know water from ERC zone comes from runoff from Potentially Acid Forming Rock, of which there will be millions and millions of tonnes, and if not contained on site will cause pollution of our aquifers and creeks forever. This is Acid Mine Drainage (AMD), the scourge created by heavy metal mining.

Captains Flat Mine near Canberra, Sunny Corner Mine near Bathurst and Woodlawn Mine near Tarago are all heavy metal mines with a long history (up to 98 years) of heavy metal pollution to streams and ground water. Repeated efforts to rectify the AMD, much of it at government expense as the miners have long since abrogated their liability, the damage is still occurring. Under the Integrated Water Management and Water Optimisation Programme outlined in this Amendment, a similar disaster can occur at Bowdens Silver Mine.

I disagree with the integrated Water Management and Supply Strategy (IWMSS) as outlined in the Amendment. By reducing the liquid level of the TSF using paste thickeners, we are even more exposed to the potential of toxic dust. This TSF does not have an overflow and could fail with lethal consequences for our water especially as Bowdens is located high in the Macquarie catchment. This mine threatens the water supply of everyone downstream of Lue.

“Bowdens Silver’s long-term objective is to discharge water collected within the sediment dams to the natural environment.”<sup>iii</sup> **This is shocking as the health of our local environment relies so much on the good management of the mine site, not only during the time when ore is being produced, but forever.**

In the early stage of the mine, Bowdens propose to draw on their harvestable rights, water licences they intend to purchase from lower down the catchment and the Sydney basin. It is not right that landowners (or miners) can transfer water rights from other areas especially to a site higher up in the catchment where the water sources are more limited. I also question whether Bowdens has purchased these water rights.

From year 3<sup>iv</sup>, half of the mine’s water needs will come from the Main Open Cut Pit. At the completion of mining, this water will continue to come from underground and will do so forever and will require management to ensure it does not overflow on to areas of PAF causing Acid Mine Drainage.

Bowdens claims they won’t have any dam overflows – how can I be sure?

Bowdens has not produced any actual data of streamflow in Hawkins and Lawson Creek but relied on modelling (Australian Water Balance Model)<sup>v</sup> and parameters for AWBM come from data collected on the Cudgegong River upstream of Rylstone, the nearest stream flow gauge operated by Water NSW. This is the nearest NSW streamflow gauge to the mine site.

This is not acceptable, yet this information Jacobs (2022)<sup>vi</sup> uses this information to predict a maximum take of 14ML/year from Lawson Creek water source. How can Bowdens assure us as they state in the Amendment that “there would be a negligible change in availability of surface water for downstream users adjacent to Lawsons Creek”<sup>vii</sup>. They have not provided sufficient evidence to back up this claim.

Bowdens has failed to address my concern that contaminated water can be retained on site forever in this Amendment. In the Amendment Bowdens proposes to line the entire TSF with bituminous geomembrane liner (BGM) but does not give a commitment to do so. I object as Bowdens must be made to line the TSF – it should not be discretionary.

This mine will not be able to operate during extreme dry weather. Local bores run dry, Lawson Creek goes back to a few water holes and local dams dry up. Most recently 2017-2019 were extremely dry years when local landholders were struggling to get water for their stock and household use.

I am aware that Bowdens does not have a power supply for the mine and is currently trying to get approval for 66kV powerline through an environmentally sensitive area between the Bylong Road and the mine site. Bowdens also does not yet have the power to relocate the 500kV high transmission lines from the mine site. I object to the Amendment regarding relocating the 500kV lines as it will adversely affect residents of Lue. How can Bowdens seek to operate a mine without a power supply?

We have made many sightings of koalas in the vicinity of the mine site. Bowdens has not adequately assessed impact on koalas nor has Bowdens adequately assessed Aboriginal Heritage sites on its land.

Bowdens Silver Mine will be only 1.9km from Lue Primary School and the village of Lue with its 92 houses – a not insignificant sized village.

If Bowdens Silver Mine goes ahead, I object to:

1. The threat imposed by the exposure to lead that will result from Bowdens lead mine.  
There is no safe level of exposure to lead dust
2. The enormous mountain 30 million tonnes of Potential Acid Forming Rock left behind at the end of mining forever
3. The 43,700 tonnes of chemical waste
4. The noise and light pollution caused by mine operations – 7 days a week
5. The loss of habitat for koalas and other endangered species
6. The congestion on and consequent damage to our narrow and winding local roads
7. A tailings storage facility that is 112 hectares in size and is experimental in design – I don't want to live near a test case for widespread chemical pollution

8. Dust is an enormous problem in mining especially when miners have insufficient water. Lue will be covered in toxic dust during droughts and most likely at other times.
9. Bowdens has not considered extreme weather events in its modelling and has not consulted local landholders who have rainfall records going back over 100 years.

My family and friends have lived with the prospect of a silver mine at Lue for 30 years. The mining lease has changed owners many times. Each new owner spends a little more time and money to get approval to mine silver, lead and zinc. Every owner has failed because there are just too many excellent reasons why this polluting and dangerous mine cannot go ahead. Bowdens has gone further than all the other proponents; they have divided our community by either buying or entering agreements to buy many small landholders in turn buying their silence; they have taken over our local pub; they're offering the (false) prospect of lots of jobs; they're offering fairly meagre amounts of sponsorship to our local sporting organisations and shows and they are paying to get advertorials in our local papers.

The fact remains – if Bowdens goes ahead it will destroy our valley.

Kind regards

Sarah Inglis

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<sup>i</sup> Water Supply Amendment Report Report NO. 429/39 p.8

<sup>ii</sup> Water Supply Amendment Report Report NO. 429/39 p.11

<sup>iii</sup> Water Supply Amendment Report Report NO. 429/39 p.16

<sup>iv</sup> Water Supply Amendment Report Report NO. 429/39 Figure 3.3

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<sup>v</sup> Water Supply Amendment Report Report NO. 429/39 p.37 6.2.2.2

<sup>vi</sup> Water Supply Amendment Report Report NO. 429/39 p.40

<sup>vii</sup> Water Supply Amendment Report Report NO. 429/39 p.41 6.2.5.3