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Submission regarding the Bowden Silver Mine Proposal
Project SSD 5765

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to comment on this project.

I oppose the Bowden Silver mine project for a number of reasons.

1 Impact on groundwater and surface water

The mine proposes to use 2000 megalitres of water each year. About 800 megalitres of ground water will be taken from the Lawson Creek Catchment. As a result, it is expected that many springs and bores in the area will cease to operate, seriously affecting domestic and stock water supply on nearby properties. Bowdens expect that the water table at the mine will drop by 25 metres.

Bowdens propose to build a large tailings dam less than 1 km from Lawson Creek., which will contain cyanide, lead, arsenic and cadmium. This will be located 1km from Lawson Creek, with no second wall to protect the community or environment should the first wall be breached. Leaching from the tailings dam will be difficult to control and could contaminate Lawson Creek.

2 Impact of lead dust on the community, especially children

The silver mine is located 2.5 km from the village of Lue. It is expected that lead will comprise about 42% of production at the mine. Experts have provided evidence that lead dust from the mine will affect residents and the environment within 2 km of the mine and probably as far as 5 km from the mine (Prof. Barry Nollar and Dr Mark Taylor).

Lead dust is especially harmful to children as its toxicity is cumulative. According to the World Health Organisation, exposure to lead can affect the development of the brain and nervous system of young children. Lue Public School is about 2 km from the mine and students at the school could suffer serious and permanent health effects, e.g. brain damage, if exposed to lead dust from the mine.

3 Impact on the community

The residents of Lue and surrounding areas overwhelmingly oppose the mine as they think it would have a detrimental impact on the community and the local environment (Lue Action Group - lueactiongroup.org). It may well destroy the village as happened to the nearby villages of Wollar and Bylong when mining interests came to the area.

4 Destruction of native vegetation

The project will destroy 381.7 ha of native vegetation including approximately 182.3 ha of critically endangered Box Gum Woodland. A number of endangered and vulnerable species inhabit this ecological community including the koala (vulnerable), the regent honeyeater (critically endangered), the swift parrot (endangered) and the spotted quoll (vulnerable).