

BOWDEN'S SILVER PROJECT

PROPOSED MINE DEVELOPMENT, LUE NSW

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission in relation to the above-mentioned proposed development. My name is Colleen Farrow and I am writing a submission in opposition to this development.

I have lived in the Central West, NSW for almost 30 years – many of them spent at Lue where my husband and I own a house. My work takes me across this region and I have witnessed the development of several mines including near Ulan, Toongi and Tomingley. I have had many discussions with landholders in and close to these sites, particularly those near Ulan and Wollar – both proponents and those that are opposed. Over time the demise of these small localities that were once thriving communities has taken place and is largely due to mine development. For some, the emotional and financial impact has taken its toll, with families and individuals either forced to move or choosing to re-locate. And for many who thought this was where they would spend the remainder of their lives, the impact on mental health is alarming.

Please don't let the Lue village and surrounds become another victim of such a development. There is no doubt that employment is important but surely quality of life and the health of our community out-weighs a short-term investment.

Statistics printed in the EIS Summary Booklet state that 30 million tonnes of ore and 47 million tonnes of acid bearing waste rock will be mined, a total of 77 million tonnes (Corkery, 2020)! This will leave a scar and vegetative fragmentation across the landscape which is currently comprised of Box Gum Grassy Woodland, listed as an Endangered Ecological Community (EEC) – a conservation status just below critically endangered. Australia is already losing native vegetation at an alarming rate with studies revealing that less than 4% of this particular EEC remains in the landscape (Thomas et. al., 2000). This then results in habitat reduction and the loss of many critically endangered native species, such as the Regent Honeyeater which is known to seasonally use the area. In addition, the Koala, a fauna species of conservation significance was sighted at the front gate of the proposed mine site, as can be seen in a photo on the Lue Action Group website.

Aside from the impact on our natural resources, there are implications to the community – related to health, financial stress for those with properties now with a low chance of resale and the longevity of this region as a contributor to tourism and agricultural production.

Although slated as a silver mine, the extraction of this mineral is insignificant. Lead and zinc will be mined at far greater amounts – 95,000 tonnes and 130,000 tonnes respectively in relation to 1800 tonnes of silver, or 0.5% of the total amount. Studies show that there is no safe exposure level to lead (Lanphear, 2017), and Lue village is situated 2kms from the mine. This includes an active school community. Professor Mark Taylor from Macquarie University who specialises in environmental contamination and the risks they pose to human health, has attended Lue and addressed the community at various gatherings. He stated it is possible that residents and the environment out to 5km from the mine would be affected by

lead due to dust blowing from the mine site, which is open cut. The smallest exposure could have the biggest impacts on resident's health, as it would create a cumulative effect by the time lead levels increased (Snyder, 2012). Evidence indicates that even blood lead levels in children below 5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ are associated with a range of adverse health outcomes, including decreased intelligence and academic achievement, socio behavioural problems such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, learning difficulties, oppositional and conduct disorders, and delinquency (Taylor et al, 2012). Despite the best efforts of mining operators, the geographic location of the mine to the Lue village will result in exposure to lead through windblown particles. In terms of health, the residents of Lue will be affected.

Please do not approved this mine. The Lue village is too close to the mine site. Although I am grateful for efforts by Silver Mines Limited to reduce the impacts, the environmental and social impacts cannot be resolved. No amount of pre-planning, environmental impact statements and surveys can truly ascertain the outcomes of a development such as this. Will mining families move to Lue and join the other residents as they listen to blasting six days a week? Will mining employees send their children to Lue Public School to be exposed to mining dust in the playground? Will Silver Mines Limited carry out their commitment to mine rehabilitation? Are the authors of the EIS documents willing to stand by their findings and move to Lue and live two kilometres from a mine they recommend as proceeding?

Due to the proximity to the village, the only viable alternative is for Silver Mines Limited to purchase all residences where owners are keen to sell. While resulting in a social disintegration of the village and the surrounding district, this approach would allow those wanting to leave with an alternative. If this is not to be considered, the only option is to not approve this development and ensure the community remains and the surrounding landscape is unaffected by a mine that is likely to bring another village to its knees.

Two kilometres is too close.

Regards



Colleen Farrow

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References:

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