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### **Background**

I have lived in the area since Dec 1996. During that time I have worked in Mudgee Community Health and with my then husband operated a horse breeding business (showjumpers, dressage and 3-day event horses). I currently operate a farmstay accommodation business mostly with a steady flow of people from Sydney. This provides me with a lifestyle that I love. Showcasing our beautiful Rylstone, Lue Mudgee area with it's Wollemi National Park just down the road, with our wimeries, with our beautiful mountains. When I first moved to the area the town was asleep on the weekends (except for show weekend). But now the city has come to us and now everyone wants to move here. Who knows – since Covid-19 and working from home I would say that the regions are about to go through a boom. However, nobody wants to live near a lead mine. Everyone has heard about the effects of lead on human, animal and environmental health. So I'm extremely worried that the health of our community physically, emotionally, socially and economically will be destroyed by Bowden's lead/zinc mine.

### **Key Objections to Bowdens Lead/Zinc/silver application**

- Impacts of lead dust on health of the community and the environment
- Impacts on Lawson Creek water table
- Waste Rock (77ha) management currently and future management of this site at completion of the project
- Tailings Storage Facility 117ha management (current and future) and risks of leaking contaminating Lawson Creek and subsequent flowons to Cudgegong River, Macquarie River and ultimately the Darling/Murray water system.

### **Impacts of lead and heavy metal dust on health of the community and the environment**

The Bowden's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) does not address the health impacts of lead dust on the community of Lue and surrounds. It fails to assess the community's exposure to concentrates mine ore materials (stockpiled oxide material and tailings) as sources of dust. Dust and particularly lead dust is not only carried on the wind but on mine vehicle wheels, in water ie Lawson creek and subsequently the Cudgegone River. Many of us local farmers (cattle, sheep, alpaca, grapes, olives, horses) depend on the surface water for their livelihoods. I am a horse Warmblood Horse breeder (somewhat small compared to thoroughbred studs) but it is a part income on which I depend. Moreover, it is an investment I have made over 25 years in infrastructure including horse fencing, training facilities, horse transport vehicles etc. The emotional notwithstanding the economic impact on losing mares and foals to sickness or death as a result of lead poisoning would be devastating. This is not to diminish the effect it would have on my and my family's own water which is from rainwater tanks. Rainwater is collected from our roof which would be constantly be exposed to lead and other mineral dust particles. As the crow flies Bowden's mine is 8.9Km from my farm. During the last drought I had dust on my windows that was blown in on dust storms from way out west. It is naïve to think that dust from 9km away will not land on my windows, roof, pastures, vehicle and our family and guests. Bowden's know this. They haven't addressed how they will mitigate the health risks of lead and other heavy metal dust in their EIS. There is no safe level of lead exposure. Toxic effects are evident at less than 5 µg/dL and have lifelong effects on multiple organs including the cardiovascular system (Lanphear et al. 2018)

### **Impacts on Lawson Creek water table**

I have a groundwater licence to pump water for my stock and to water the garden. It is part of the Murray Darling Basin Plan and is a licence to pump 11Megalitres per annum which costs approximately \$120 a year. Lawson Creek, I was told by the representative from Water NSW, starts on my property, Camphill. Not above ground but below. During the last drought, the submersible bore pump which is usually set at 14m below ground had to be lowered 3 metres. That is how much the water table dropped. Now I am worried that if the mine proposes to pump 5 Megalitres per day for 365 days per year – how will the groundwater table not drop drastically. I rang and asked Bowden's about this. Their answer astounded me. It was “you won't be affected because you're upstream from the mine”. Now I'm not a hydrogeologist but I have pulled the plug out of a bathtub. If the water is draining away faster than it can fill – the water table will drop. It isn't rocket science. What was more concerning for me was that the person telling me this was a Bowden's employee and I wondered about his lack of even basic knowledge of physics. These people are going to build and operate a mine using thousands of tons of extremely toxic chemicals above a fragile water table within 2Kms of a community of 200 people and a school? That is when I knew I had to learn more about the details of the Bowden's Proposal. Everyone knows how lead exposure is cumulative and that the body never disposes of it. I think that is why Bowden's have called this a “Silver” mine. Because Silver sounds shiny like jewellery or expensive cutlery. Lead sounds like dead.

### **Waste Rock (77ha) management currently and future management of this site at completion of the project**

I am a Registered and from 2013-2015 worked for NT Health in the Indigenous Health at Boroloola a small town in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Extrata (now Glencore) are mining Lead and Zinc 70Kms from Boroloola. During that time I saw patients come to the health clinic with numbness in their fingers, loss of balance, memory loss and many neurological problems. Blood testing revealed lead levels that were above 5ug/dl (considered toxic by WHO). This happened because the Waste Rock dump was smouldering and the fumes were infecting the Macarthur River and poisoning the Baramundi a main food source local Gudanji, Garawa, Mara and Yanuwa communities. Before the mine was built these four Aboriginal communities fought to stop the building of this mine and were given all manner of assurances that the acid forming waste rock dump would be safe. They didn't believe Extrata and took the issue to the Supreme court and won. Then the Federal Government overruled the Supreme Court. So the mine went ahead. Not a lot of people down in the southern states heard about this. Now Extrata has an extension to keep mining until 3037 because there is no way the NT government has the money to deal with the toxic waste rock safely. The waste dump contamination has killed the river according to local Traditional Owners. I related this piece of recent history because I can learn from the Boroloola people, that the waste from mining is not something that can just be ignored. It is there for hundreds of years. This acid forming waste rock dump as well as the tailings dam will be above the water table that flows into the Cudgeong which flows into the MacQuarie which flows into the Darling and then the Murray. That river system is already extremely stressed. I fear for it's life with a cyanide, lead, maganese, zinc, arsenic cocktail in it's veins and capillaries. The mine life is for 17 years. There are, according to Bowden's 400 jobs to be had. But what sort of environment will we be living (or dying) in? What sort of country are we handing our children and our grandchildren? Not as safe and bountiful as the one we were handed that is for sure. But not if we choose wisely and look at history. If the reader of this submission has time, I encourage you to read the most comprehensive article on the Boroloola experience: <https://www.buzzfeed.com/hannahryan/boroloola-mcarthur-river-mine-nt-environment>

### **Conclusion**

With a generation of young people looking for a future in a post Covid, post bush-fire prone, gobal

warming world there is little hope we can offer them in the short term.....it's going to be a rough future for sure for them. We can though, preserve the environment to make it as sustainable as possible so they can at least have clean water to drink and clean air to breathe, to garden, to raise stock. Jpbs and industries come and go. Build and collapse. The land, the water, the air, the flora and fauna are under tremendous threat in Australia. The bushfires around here taught us that last summer. A mine like Bowdens will be one more huge stress on this landscape. Better that we have tourism \$ (which the whole community gets a share of) for it's beauty than destroy it for Bowdens \$.