

I am a local Bathurst resident and my family have been in the Bathurst area for over 200 years. I have been a member of the Carcoar Dam Sailing Club. I have witnessed the effect of a number of droughts on this dam and the Belubula River.

This proposed mine will cause a large and permanent degradation of the water quality and quantity flowing into the Carcoar Dam and the downstream river which feeds into the Lachlan River, a significant part of the Murray-Darling system. The sealing of the springs that feed the Belubula River which will reduce the water flow in this time of drought is indefensible. Regis Resources state that this will have minimal effect on the water flow, but as this drought continues any reduction in water flow is not acceptable.

The quantity of flow reduction is one thing but what is more critical is the quality of the water leaving the mining site. The tailings dam is to be 60m high and designed to seep, and as the water that will be used in the mining process and dust control will be sourced in part from Mt Piper Power Station and colliery waste containing brine concentrate and heavy metals, it is therefore extremely likely that this will enter the Belubula River.

Given that Regis has already experienced a tailings dam failure at one of its mines and Cadia mine, less than 30km from the proposed Regis site, has recently experienced a failure of its tailings dam it is foreseeable that the McPhillamys tailings dam is more than likely to experience a similar failure. If this was to occur then the effects would be catastrophic for all residents along the Belubula River, Carcoar Dam, and the downstream Murray Darling River System and any town dependent on the water from the Belubula River. The tailings would also contain any unchanged Sodium Cyanide, arsenic, heavy metals, asbestos and the various salts from the colliery mine waste water. These toxic residues will persist for a very long time. There have been a number of well documented incidents of tailings dam failures where the effects have impacted a large number of people and damaged river systems.

Regis state that the sodium cyanide is degraded by sunlight, but the available formation shows resultant byproducts are still toxic. These will continue to leach into the environment long after the mine has ceased operations.

According to the Regis document the pipeline from Mt Piper Power Station may be subject to leaks. This pipeline will have 112 water crossings including the Macquarie River.

Regis state that it is not economical to fully restore the mine site or even fill the void. This void will be 1Km wide and 450m deep which according to Regis' own reports will affect the local water table and river for over 400 years. The tailings dam will be covered over but will never be able to be cropped or even have trees grown on it as this would damage the clay seal.

Given that the current estimate of gold stored in vaults around the world in 2019 is approximately 190,000 metric ton, what is the point of mining to produce around 113Kg of gold? The majority of the profits will leave Australia and the region will be left with a toxic waste site seeping into the Belubula River.

The stated number of jobs that Regis say will be created by this mine have yet to be quantified in detail and there is no guarantee that they will be created or that jobs will be filled by local workers and not FIFOs. Given that the current trend is to automate mining the quoted benefit to the local economy is unlikely to fully eventuate.