

I hold the following concerns with regards to the proposed McPhillamy's mine site development. I have listed them in categories below.

#### WATER:

Australia is currently experiencing one of the most devastating droughts in living history. In a situation whereby the value of water is exponentially increasing, it is ludicrous to suggest that a single company can deliberately contaminate the local area's groundwater supply for hundreds of years with toxic chemicals, all in the pursuit of profit. Regis plans to place a tailings dam over the headwaters to the Belubula River. At the information sessions I repeatedly asked the question of what happens if the tailings dam were to leak, if some catastrophic event occurred and the tailings were released into the Belubula as well as over the surrounding fertile farmland, and I was continually told this was not predicted to happen, but after much persistence, I received confirmation that this dramatic occurrence had not even been considered by Regis. Which only highlights the disregard that I have seen Regis giving to the concerns of people opposing the development.

Downstream from the mine the Belubula river flows through the town of Blayney, rich alluvial flats grazing land, and into Carcoar Dam. There is the potential for the Tablelands Water supply to be polluted via the planned pipeline connecting Lake Rowlands and Carcoar Dam. Below Carcoar Dam the Belubula passes through several rural communities, much grazing and cropping country and ultimately feeds into the Lachlan River west of Cowra. I am not a water scientist, however Regis have confirmed that the tailings dam will be porous, though they assured me it would be incredibly slow, the fact remains that this tailings dam will remain for many hundreds of years, so the local area and the tributaries from the Belubula river will continue to be contaminated for many hundreds of years, albeit slowly. The mine itself will also fill with water – which will also contribute to the contamination of the ground water. All this downstream as well as the local groundwater and the local farmland stands to be potentially contaminated, but not only that, I would consider that blocking many kilometres of the headwaters would have significant effect on the flow of the Belubula river. Regis have also refused to answer my questions with regards to the potential effect on the water flow, as all of their studies on water flow have not taken into account the current drought. I would consider that longer term studies by objective scientists should be performed before any development is permitted.

In addition to blocking the Belubula river head waters, Regis plans to sink bores onsite for the construction and operation phases prior to the Lithgow pipeline becoming operational. Regis denied this until recently. This is of major concern to the local community as there will be depletion of the groundwater. The area local to the mine is reliant on rainwater collection and/or groundwater via bores for human and livestock consumption, as well as for gardens, pasture and businesses.

Furthermore, what will happen when the open cut mine reaches, and perhaps surpasses, the level of the groundwater? Regis is unable or unwilling to answer my questions with regards to this potential effect on the local bores.

The proposed plan to pipe many litres of dirty saline water from Lithgow to the McPhillamy's mine is of concern as well. This is water that Sydney does not want in Warragamba Dam; that has its origins in the degrading wetlands of the western Blue Mountains, polluted by being filtered through coal seams and by being used in a coal washery, and has its salt content multiplied by addition of brine, the waste product of a desalination plant at the Mount Piper Power Station. The net result will be the introduction of a very large volume of poor quality water and the supply of thousands of tonnes of salt to the already overburdened Murray – Darling Basin.

#### EFFECTS ON THE 'NEAR NEIGHBOURS' OF THE MINE

The proposed mine would have a dramatic effect on the near neighbours of the mine especially, but not limited to, the settlement of Kings Plains that live on the south side of the valley facing the potential mine site. Here the open cut pit will be excavated and a large waste rock disposal area including a high embankment to be constructed over a period of four years. This will be a continuous source of noise, dust, and at night, light pollution during the life of the mine – after the first 6 months of construction on the site it is proposed that mining activity will proceed for ten years, 24 hours a day, seven days a week and fifty-two weeks a year, blasting permitted for 12 hours a day.

I have family that have sold their property to Regis. Property they planned to remain in the family for generations. This is after almost a decade of being assured that there would be no effects of being within a stone's throw of the mine site itself, finally Tony McPaul admitted that living in the house would be unpleasant, to say the least. The Regis company was completely dismissive of any concerns my family members had, for so many years, which had such a significant effect on the mental health of my family members, I was concerned that the depression and anxiety may have lead to suicide. Thankfully, an intervention was implemented prior to my family becoming another statistic, however the response from the Regis employees and the company as a whole was so poor and dismissive that there could have been a correlation between the stressors; that I am concerned for those residents without the significant support system my family experienced.

The near neighbours will have a significant concern with regards to the value of their property decreasing if the proposed mine should proceed. Regis has stated that the financial burden of the decline in property value rests with the existing owners.

The blasting may have enormous effect on the structural integrity of many homes and buildings in the near area. How does Regis plan to deal with the inevitable complaints from residents whose houses, sheds or other structures have been damaged by mining activities? Especially the more fragile heritage listed buildings?

#### THE EFFECTS ON BLAYNEY TOWNSHIP

Blayney town is sufficiently close to experience the noise of blasting, the night -light and in adverse weather conditions, dust from the mine including that from the

tailings that are enriched in elements including arsenic, copper, sulphur, zinc, cadmium, and selenium.

While the proponents of the mine speak of additional residents, business opportunities, employment, and additional rate income, what is to become of the plans for encouraging tourism? Will there be accommodation available for tourists, will business be lost by the shops, cafes hotels and motels? Will tourists still want to come? Will the presence of a mine waste dump be a welcoming sign for those travelling along the eastern entry? What of the cost of renting in Blayney, already short of such accommodation – will the less well - off be squeezed out by well-paid miners? Will local businesses lose skilled workers and potential apprentices for the same reason? The mine life is 10 years – what will happen then to the work force residents of Blayney? Will they find the employment for which they have developed skills and will businesses buoyed by contracts from the mine survive the inevitable mine-closure bust and will the Shire accommodate easily to the loss of rate income?

#### INTERGENERATIONAL EQUITY

The planned McPhillamy's gold mine is a good example of intergenerational inequity. The present generation reaps the benefit of the sale of the gold; whereas succeeding generations inherit a toxic tailings dam designed to leak into the headwaters of the Belubula River, and a pit that will leak water contaminated to a degree that it is unsuitable for cattle to drink into the groundwater reservoir and possibly to the Belubula River for tens or hundreds of years. Additionally, in the absence of any strategy to minimize greenhouse gas emissions from the site the miners will leave a legacy contributing to global climatic change, principally global warming and increased extreme climatic events. The latter increases the possibility of high precipitation events with the risk of deep erosion of the engineered steep embankments and the catastrophic release of mobilized tailings and acid metalliferous drainage.

#### NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA

Development of the mine site will lead to the destruction of 44 Ha of critically endangered Blackley's Red Gum – White Box – Yellow Box grassy woodland and the habitat of at least two colonies of squirrel gliders, and at least one koala colony. Both animals are listed as vulnerable. Threatened bird species reported include the Regent honey eater. The Kings Plains district has a very wide range of commoner bird species as well as kangaroos, wallabies, wombats, echidnas, frogs and reptiles. All such fauna will be to a degree displaced by destruction of habitat and the effects of noise, dust, night light, and destruction of potable water sources. Combined these indicate a risk to local biodiversity and a reason for rejecting the mine.

#### DUST

The McPhillamy's mine blasting as well as the crushing plant will contribute large amounts of dust into the local area's air. One only has to drive towards Carcoar to see the plumes of dust from the Cadia crushing plant, many kilometres away. Regis has thus far been unable to answer my questions with regards to the effects that this dust will have on human residents, particularly those with chronic health problems

such as asthma. In addition to this, I am a local veterinarian and have major concerns with regards to the effect this dust will have on the animals in the local area. When I raised these concerns with Regis, I was again dismissed, however when I persisted and requested the scientific studies behind their assurance that there would be no ill effects, I was directed toward some studies that measured the impact of barn housing on cattle. This is completely erroneous, as the main contributing factor to the air quality in intensive indoor animal production such as barn housing is ammonia. What will the effects of the dust be on the cattle? The sheep? Dogs? Cats? Local wildlife? The horses in particular are susceptible to respiratory distress secondary to inhalant irritants. In an established community of people and animals, why should the majority have this major health risk inflicted upon them by a single entity in pursuit of profit?

#### ANIMALS

I am a local veterinarian. I am gravely concerned by the impact this proposed mine will have on the resident animal populations.

The dust pollution I have discussed above. In addition to this, animals will be drinking water contaminated with dust from the mine, or drinking water contaminated with heavy metals from the tailings dam. Elements such as selenium, copper, zinc, cadmium, and arsenic are all toxic to animals in high dosages. How will Regis mitigate this risk? For every animal that is unwell in the local area to the proposed mine, will Regis be able to fund an investigation to determine if the problem is caused by mining activities? If the disease is found to be caused by the mining activities what course of action will Regis take? Will they fund treatment? Will they replace the animal?

Light pollution will impact breeding in most species of mammal and marsupial in the area. There are a number of horse, cattle and sheep farms in the immediate surrounding area. What does Regis propose to mitigate the impact of the light pollution causing problems with breeding pursuits? In addition to this, there does not seem to be any available information with regards to the native flora and fauna breeding colonies in the immediate area of the mine. I firmly believe that further ecological studies must be performed prior to the proposed mine being commenced.

The blasting will be permitted 12 hours a day. How does Regis propose to habituate the resident animals to blasting? Without a schedule it will be impossible to plan (particularly) equine activities without risk of serious injury to the animal and the human. Will Regis cover veterinary work required by animals injured by being scared by blasting/other mining activities?

#### TRAFFIC

My family live on the Vittoria Road and until the mining employees began using the Dungeon Road (small dirt road) in a very fast and unsafe manner, we used to travel on the Dungeon Road frequently to get to Bathurst. This option will no longer be available to us if the mine were to be developed.

In addition to this, the Vittoria Road has a 10 tonne limit. If the McPhillamy's mine were to be commenced, would this be raised? If so, would the road be upgraded? At whose cost?

I have grave concerns for the traffic on the Mid Western Highway. This is a road known for accidents, yet we are to be having tired mine workers on the road twice daily at shift change, surely this will lead to inevitable increase in accidents? Not only concerning for the people involved, but also for the emergency personnel that are called.

The proposed McPhillamy's mine will require huge movements of dangerous chemicals and inflammable materials on the local roads. How does Regis plan to mitigate this risk? This reliance on road transport and fossil fuels is another concern with regards to the impact of the proposed mine on climate change.

#### BUSHFIRE

There does not seem to be any plan in place for bushfire retardant work to be completed on the newly constructed grassy woodland knolls. What is the proposed plan? Will this simply be another strain on the already stretched Rural Fire Brigades?

#### OTHER POTENTIAL LOSSES

The development of the McPhillamy's mine site necessarily involves the loss of productive agricultural land, some of this permanently, for example the grassy woodland to be established on the site of the waste rock emplacement where grazing will not be possible. In a world short of food with a population estimated to grow within a couple of generations to in excess of 7 billion but no shortage of gold (over 40% is locked up in vaults) the morality of preferring gold mining over food production in a rich country like Australia must be questioned.

There are numerous small to medium sized businesses in the area around the mine site. These businesses will all be significantly impacted, to the point of closure. Although proponents of the mine will often lead the argument with the numbers of jobs produced, my concern is the number of jobs that will be lost. Visitors will be reluctant to stay at Air BandB's near the mine, equine properties including the breeding and agistment properties will be effected by the blasting as well as the light pollution (breeding) and the dust, riding tuition will cease because of the danger of blasting frightening horses, honey and queen bee production will be impacted by the effect of dust, organic and experimental biodynamic farming tuition will cease because of the dust and light pollution and the clients will probably no longer wish to board their domestic animals at kennels/cattery close to the mine.

I have outlined my main concerns with regards to the proposed McPhillamy's mine. I just cannot fathom how one company can propose to move into such a well populated area and ruin the productive farmland, utilise incredible amounts of precious water, change the flow of a river, ruin the peaceful ambience, the rural views, the air quality, to destroy the capacity to run established successful businesses and then leave the area contaminated with toxic chemicals for many

hundreds of years to come, all in the pursuit of profit. Is this truly the legacy we wish to leave the generations of future Australians?