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I am writing to **strongly object** to the McPhillamy's Gold Project, application number **SSD-9505**.

I have worked from where the tailings dam is going to where the river flows into Carcoar Dam all of my life. I travel across the river every day watching it because it is the backbone of our business. The country on the river on average will carry three times more livestock per acre and is the richest of alluvial soil. As for cropping it will grow the best crops when measured tons per acre.

As you can see this is a highly productive farming area which includes grazing and cropping but is also suited to vegetables or any agricultural pursuit. As stated in the EIS Regis says that it is just grazing country however although this is the case at the moment historically this land was used previously for growing cauliflowers, potatoes, peas and carrots. It is a highly sought after, productive with general reliable rainfall in NSW.

Regis has been there for five years and they have never come to see us. We are fourth-generation farmers owning 10 km of river frontage on the Belubula river downstream between Regis and Carcoar dam. We had to go to Regis after we saw the preliminary environmental assessment last year and had two meetings with them. They said that our concerns were high-priority. However no contact was made until a year later when we made some noise at one of their open days two weeks prior to the EIS coming out. I feel the reason for this is because they do not want to know about river flows this has been shown by no testing of flow only quality in the EIS. I believe this is why Regis didn't want to know us. We were there ready to talk with 50 years experience on the river plus generations of knowledge but no contact from Regis or their experts. We know this river, we live on it, go over every day more than once and our whole business relies on it.

OUR BUSINESS

Our business is a grass fed, fattening clean, chemical free, beef and lamb, MSA (Meat Standards Australia) accredited, biodiversity accredited business. Our stock run on the fertile alluvial soil flats along the river which provides the best fattening country enabling us to fatten cattle in prime markets receiving premium prices. If there is no water in our river our premium market cannot be met and will change the whole production of our business which will affect kilos of beef and lamb.

We have worked extremely hard to get into this premium market and it has taken years of breeding stock. To lose this accreditation due to the contamination and supply of the river water is many years of hard work down the drain and could possibly cost us our whole business. There has been no mention or discussion of any compensation given that this project is going to affect our business and livelihood not just while they are there but hundreds of years after they have finished.

SPRINGS

The river will run most of the year as it is a spring system that relies on the springs especially on dry times. When the river does dry out in the summer you will find that the springs will open up and fill the river and all the alluvial soil surrounding it which enables it to be fully charged, then the rains come and run into Carcoar dam. The springs are located right where the tailings dam is proposed. If they are cut off we will have to rely on rainfall to run the river. This might feed the river but depending on the event water may

not make it to Carcoar dam. I don't think that in the EIS this scenario has been assessed. And of course the pit will have an affect on the springs as well as well as groundwater with the drawdown into the hole. This is a natural system that works as a part of nature. It is not turned on and off by man so it should not be tampered with or we will lose it.

I believe Regis does not want to know the flows of the Belubula river or test them. Being able to model them on data works in favour for Regis as the modelling can be suited and be in favour of the irrigation licenses . **I would like to know the amount they will need and where and how they are going to be obtained?**

TAILINGS DAM

I would like to know what happens to the testing boreholes that are below the tailings dam which will be catching any contaminated water and also the spring water? Regis has previously told us that this water will flow 'on its merry way' (quote taken from an article in the Blayney Chronicle by Tony McPaul) once they block the springs. **Exactly how does this happen? And at the end of the mine life where does the water go out of these boreholes? There will be no one there monitoring these bores and would like to know whether they will be going on their merry way with contaminated water?**

Last year when we met with Regis we asked Tony McPaul and Rod Smith why the tailing storage facility wall is over and in the Belubula river. They explained to us that this was the most economical place for them to put it. They explained having to only build one wall was much more economical than having to build many in the case of a turkeys nest. They said they were going to use cyanide to process the gold, again saying that this was the most economical method for this ore type. There are other methods of extracting gold and tailing dam placement which might not be economically suited to Regis but may suit the surrounding stakeholders, environment, and biodiversity. If this is the only option to extract the skulls economically then surely it should not be mind. It seems as if it is economically right for Regis then it should suit everybody else involved which is wrong and hypocritical especially as Regis are always stating that they are part of our community.

ECONOMIC BOOST

Regis has stated that their mine operation will give an economical boost to the region through jobs. We already have an economically stable community which is shown by our extremely low unemployment rate. Regis have stated in their EIS that there is to be 65 jobs created from the Blayney LGA when it is in its operations phase. The Beekeepers Inn which not only has a thriving cafe in a Cobb and Co building, but also runs the biggest apiary business in Australia as well as a brewery and wedding function destination, already employs 40 people (which will be severely effected) and if you add on other agricultural jobs being lost to the mine area it seems that this area is already very sustainable without risking any harm to the environment and leaving this area for future generations to thrive and enjoy. This is an example of long term employment and tourist attractions as opposed to short term destructive employment for a transient population.

WATER

Given that Cadia Gold Mine already draws water out of the Belubula system and will do for many years to come we have seen Carcoar dam nearly empty many times. I don't believe that the system can withstand any more pressure put on it.

12 years ago, the RTA upgraded and built Pattersons bridge over a waterhole on the Mid Western highway approx 2 kms north of Blayney, through our property. This bridge was

built purposely longer to withstand flooding which in years previously went over the highway and closed the road. Although there is not a massive catchment above this, in times of a lot of water logging soil, and high rain years, flooding could have a devastating affect on the project area especially during construction e.g. sediment loss or contamination. The Dungeon road was closed in January 2019 after a massive storm in the tailings dam area which filled the river and flow down into Carcoar Dam. Events like this will not only affect the flow of the river but could spill over dams in the project site contaminating the river system. **Where are Regis records of such events?**

Evidently, given the size of the project we should have more real actual evidence for example water flow testing rather than modelling, monitoring, and minimising. Regis said that we will only lose 4% of surface flow from the catchment. 4% depending on rainfall events could be the difference in making the river run or not. They tell us this is insignificant amount and will not affect much, however it may be insignificant to them but obviously not to us down stream.

And added concerns surrounding water is the mix of water coming in the pipeline from Lithgow. We are aware that this water is highly contaminated and will contain heavy metals including copper, boron, mercury arsenic just to name a few.

DAMS

The primary water management facility WMF dam which is 1 km in length and only 150 m from the river looks to have no backup system if it fails to hold or leak. Being at the same level as the river this dam carries potentially very toxic chemicals gathered from the processing plant. It has not been given any attention in the EIS. The secondary WMF will have a spillway somewhere in the embankment. This dam which will have a buildup of heavy metals like many on the project site and will potentially leach into the soil. Much of the water in these facilities and surrounding areas is pipe line water being pumped from Lithgow which has been reported to be very high and heavy metals such as arsenic copper boron etc. **Why has Regis done nothing to ensure contamination from these water management facilities that are placed all over the project area?** At the most recent open day experts explained that they would clean these facilities out at rehabilitation stage and move the contaminated soil. **I would like to know where this soil will then be dumped?** There was no indication that this soil would ever leave the Mine site.

MINE SITE LAYOUT

When considering the plan Regis had stated they are reducing their mine site footprint. I have some concerns around this especially their placement of the explosion and processing plant and heavy machinery so close to all of the holding dams and tailing storage facility. This could cause a lot of vibration and risk of cracking and failure. Also the recent seismic activity within our region, namely the tremor with the epicentre at Moorilda less than 10 km from the mine site last year. I also have grave concerns surrounding the placement of the ammunition storage where this is within very close proximity to the tailings facility wall. I believe this is a very risky place to put in storage due to the fact that if the tailings dam wall fails due to an unexpected explosion everyone downstream will be in trouble.

And whilst on the topic of explosions during the preliminary environmental assessment Regis states that they will minimise any flyrock that may occur on the mid Western Highway. My children travel this road every single day and the idea that they could be subjected to flyrock hitting a bus window and causing a massive accident is unacceptable. This has not been addressed anywhere that I can see in the EIS and is a

huge concern to me as there is no buffer between the pit and the highway. **Where has Regis addressed this and what do they plan on doing it to keep people safe?**

NEIGHBOURS

Dust, noise, air-pollution, lights, visual. These are all major issues in the EIS. However any issues seem to stop at the Regis Boundary conveniently. There is no buffer zone around this project and any consideration for neighbouring properties. Regis has stated they are mitigating with Kings Plains people. I believe double glazed windows and curtains and air conditioning just doesn't cut it, considering what these people will have to live with and are already living with as their lives are in limbo. It seems to me Regis has left the burden of monitoring this project to the neighbours and the surrounding community whilst they go on to reap the rewards. This is proven throughout the EIS where there has been no testing or results gathered at this point in time. This is wrong and this is really just his project not the people and it will be us who will be affected. And the results should have been completed before the EIS came out and not put on the people in this community. If the testing hasn't been done and the results haven't been gathered then this project should be on hold until this has been finalised.

EXPERTS

When we build dams on our property we go through our excavating and earthmoving contractors who have huge amounts of experience and expertise and are the best people to get this job done right. However after visiting one of the Regis open days I find it interesting that many of their experts have had previous positions at Cadia a gold mine. This alarm is me as these people were involved in building the now failed tailings dam wall, a massive ongoing disaster which will have permanent effects on the surrounding community forever. This gives me no confidence in their ability to build a tailings dam facility that is going to with stand anything put up against it, as they are claiming. And these are not the only issues with mines around our area. We also have massive issues with Junctions Reef rehabilitation and the leaking of cyanide into the surrounding water table, Browns Creek mine which flooded unexpectedly a number of years ago. There are many examples that prove to us that mines are unsafe, unreliable, and totally unnecessary in our community.

BIODIVERSITY

This area of mine site is especially historic to the area given the number of box in gumtree and native vegetation that will be flattened. Blayney is an area where much was cleared of in past generations and there is little of it left for the next generation. The property that Regis has bought on the southern side of Blayney has been advertised as a carbon offset to their footprint. Some of this property is already under stewardship with native bushland so unless Regis is planning on planting more trees throughout the property there is really no gain at all. To remove native and water habitat from this area will have dire affects on all species of animals even if there is a break in only one of the life cycles.

ASBESTOS

Asbestos to me seems to be a major issue given that the New South Wales Government Resources and Geoscience map looks to go right across the site of the high potentially occurring asbestos and there is not many of these deposits in New South Wales. Given the alarming information I believe this should be looked into more detail before even one sod is turned.

MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health has a massive impact now. Many people are losing sleep before they have even turned a sod on this project. This devastation has already started. Interestingly it states in the EIS page 72 appendix T that they will offer to meet with downstream land owners to discuss EIS findings. This did not happen which seems to be a recurring theme with Regis and their behaviour. **Given that we are currently in one of the worst droughts ever seen in Australia how is our mental health going to withstand this project if it goes ahead?**

CONCLUSION

Local knowledge of an area should be taken on board. No one knows the area better than the people that live in it especially born and bred. We should have had some input. I find it unbelievable that this project has been given any start, given that it has so many red flags. Or could it be that the pipeline water from Lithgow which is highly contaminated needs to be pumped away from the Sydney water supply into another river system? Is this big part of a bigger issue?

This river system has been running for the last three months from the springs in one of the direst times seen, especially seeing as our house water tank is empty for the first time in 20 years.

Regis to me is only focused on gold and as humans we are focused on water. Two **Resources**, H2O and Au,

H2O	Au
Free	Huge cost to extract
Vital to life	Already enough in circulation
Clean	Risk of massive contamination
Forever	Short term gain
For All	For a small greedy few