

I have lived in the Central West region of NSW for nearly 40 years. When I first moved to Canowindra, I lived with friends on their farm on the Belubula River, where they grew lucerne on the river flats. I gained an appreciation of how the flow of the river affected livelihoods, and the whole cycle of farming and growth due to the river, which had never been at the forefront of my mind as a city-dweller. The Belubula River was also an important part of the social and recreational life of the community, as was and is the Carcoar Dam. Any threats to the purity of these must be prevented.

Having moved to Bathurst, I still have connections throughout the Central West, and travel to various events. This often involves driving through the beautiful Kings Plains area, so I am very aware of the destruction that the proposed McPhillamys Mine would cause to the natural and human environment of this area.

Covering the headwaters of a river with a tailings dam containing cyanide would not make sense in any season, but during prolonged drought, the reduction of water flow and the loss of run-off from possible rain above the proposed mine site is iniquitous. The failure of the tailings dam, as occurred at nearby Cadia mine, would be catastrophic.

It beggars belief that a childcare centre in Bathurst, one and a half kilometres from the Macquarie river, cannot spray for wasps in the grounds more than a few times a year due to proximity to the river, yet a gold mining company can plan to put a toxic tailings dam containing heavy metals and cyanide at the headwaters of the Belubula River.

The impact of the proposed mine on the residents of Kings Plains and Blayney, if it goes ahead, would be immense. A mine operating 24/7, with large numbers of trucks passing people's homes, blasting of rocks every day, and the reduced air quality from dust (which would not be controllable on days of even moderate wind) would have impacts on physical and mental health. The intrusive "amenity bund" would destroy the expansive views that residents and travellers appreciate, and the light pollution would create health issues due to sleep disturbance for anyone within the reach of the lights.

Carcoar, also dependent on the Belubula River for water, has been experiencing a resurgence in the last few years, with new shops opening, and craft workshops being well attended. A picnic on the banks of the Belubula River is a relaxing treat for travellers, and this would cease if the river become contaminated, as is entirely possible if the McPhillamys Gold Project were to go ahead.

For some time I lived with my husband and children on a farm we had purchased between Bathurst and Blayney, having previously looked at properties both in Kings Plains, and on the Mitchell Highway near the Beekeeper's Inn. Both of these properties are now affected by the proposed mine, so I have great empathy with the local residents whose way of life has been disrupted by this proposal, and would be destroyed if it was allowed to proceed.

These are just a few of the reasons for which I strongly object to the proposal, which I believe should not proceed.