

MEETING: **Bowdens Silver Project CCC – Meeting 17**

DATE: Tuesday 26 March 2024

LOCATION: Parklands Resort, Mudgee

TIME: 5:00 PM – 7:30 PM

INDEPENDENT CHAIR: David Ross (DR)

ATTENDEES: Joel Ray, Bowdens Silver (JR)
Blake Hjorth, Bowdens Silver (BH)
Tom Purcell, Bowdens Silver (TP)
Tom Combes, Community Member (TC)
Sonia Christie, Community Member (SC)
John Lydiard, Community Member (JL)
Brad Bliss, Wellington Valley Wiradjuri Aboriginal Corporation (BB)
Cr Robbie Palmer, Mid-Western Regional Council (RP)

GUEST: Sarah Bell, Umwelt Environmental and Social Consultants (SB)

APOLOGIES: Gary Rush, Mudgee Region Action Group (GR)
Phillip Freeman, Community member (PF)

1. WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

DR welcomed members to the first CCC meeting for 2024 and introduced SB who would discuss the Social Impact Management Plan (SIMP) with members.

ACTION: DR to seek feedback during next CCC meeting from members regarding his chairing

2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

DR is paid a fee to chair CCC meetings and JB is paid for taking the minutes.

3. BUSINESS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES:

DR advised all actions from the previous minutes have been completed. DR asked SC if she had received responses from JR, BH, TP. SC confirmed she had.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

All members in attendance agreed that the previous minutes were a true and concise record of the last meeting. JL noted that the minute format did not convey the emotions displayed by CCC members, for example, when there has been heated discussion on certain points. DR responded that he would consider how to manage this after future meetings.

5. CORRESPONDENCE: Nil

6. UPDATE ON PROJECT (see attached presentation)

Project Update

JR spoke to a slide on the above that covered a description of the engineering and design work that is being undertaken and liaison with Dept. of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) regarding the management plans.

JR advised Hamish Russell has been appointed as Sustainability and Approvals Manager. DR noted that, for transparency, he has previously chaired another CCC where Hamish was a mining company representative.

SC expressed concerns that CCC members will not have enough time to submit comments on the draft SIMP. Asked if Bowdens had set a timeframe. JR advised that no deadline had been locked in.

Management Plans

JR observed that the management plans are still being prepared. With respect to the development of the draft SIMP, advised that SB and Umwelt will also liaise with other community stakeholders. The draft SIMP will be sent to CCC members to review at the appropriate time.

Baseline Study

JR reminded members that, at the previous CCC meeting, he was seeking to build on what was required in the existing environmental conditions for the site and develop a steering committee, consulting with various government agencies. He reiterated that data would be provided to CCC members via their representative to ensure transparency. Government agencies have responded that, as regulators, they cannot be seen to be part of the monitoring and evaluation of baseline study.

However, UNSW has agreed to design and implement a scientifically robust program. This will be led by Dr. David Cohen. JR described the minimum regime of parameters to be measured and noted that Bowdens are mindful of the issues that took place at Cadia mine. There are only two laboratories able to analyse lead isotopes. Results will be sent directly from the laboratory to the CCC representative involved in the baseline study.

JR also informed members that Bowdens intended to follow SC's recommendation to involve Dr Bentivoglio in the monitoring and evaluation. Unfortunately, Professor Mark Taylor now works for the Victorian Government and cannot be involved.

SC then led a discussion about what happens if, in the future, there is a situation where there are samples that do not comply with what are considered to be acceptable levels. Is there a fine? Is the plant shut down? She believed that government departments failed during Cadia's operations.

JR responded that the monitoring, with the involvement of UNSW, was seeking to reduce the potential for this to happen. He noted that monitoring would also cover a voluntary water tank monitoring program. However, if there was an incident, Bowdens management plans would cover what was to take place with respect to shutting down or altering day to day operations and reporting to government.

DR informed members that, on his other CCCs, he has previously invited government regulators to present on what they do. He noted that could be something for the CCC to consider in the future and also observed that he expected the committee would hear in more detail what the monitoring programs designed by UNSW would look like as well as how Bowdens will respond should an incident happen.

Environmental Monitoring Network

TP presented proposed monitoring locations to demonstrate compliance with the mine's conditions of approval and provide data to inform adaptive management procedures such as trigger action response plans (TARPs). He also described TARPs, which document how the mine would respond should identified trigger levels be exceeded at a monitoring site – as discussed earlier in the meeting.

TP then talked to several maps that showed locations proposed for locating monitoring stations with respect to:

- Air quality monitoring
- Noise monitoring

- Blast monitoring
- Groundwater monitoring
- Surface water monitoring
- Meteorological stations

TP invited CCC members to look at the maps and comment back to Bowdens on the proposed locations or suggested alternative locations.

ACTION: TP to change the legend on each map to include the various acronyms used and forward to members.

A lengthy discussion then took place about all of the maps, starting with the proposed air quality monitoring locations map.

TC questioned why the monitoring locations aren't within Lue. He believed that noise can travel and therefore, the monitors were not in the right place.

TP – We approached the locating of monitors using scientific modelling. (To TC) But your points are valid and we'd be happy to consider feedback on locations. Key point for our overall strategy is to have a lot of monitors on Bowdens' boundaries. Want to locate monitors on land that Bowdens controls or will have long-term access to.

TC – Bowdens needs to consult with local people first.

A lengthy discussion took place with respect to each of the maps and the location of monitoring. TC objected to the monitoring locations shown on the various maps, emphasising that there needed to be stations close to, or within, Lue. He also reiterated that consultation should first take place with the wider community.

BH reminded members that the locations shown were proposed rather than finalised. He also noted that Bowdens would be guided by where the EPA wanted monitoring sites to be located.

JR requested CCC members to forward comments back to him. JL and TC observed that it would take some time for CCC members to seek feedback from the wider community. It is hard to do as they need to organise time with the wider community. In response, DR asked members if they were able to provide feedback within six weeks.

ACTION: DR to discuss progress on the locating of stations with Bowdens and communicate to CCC members before next meeting.

BB raised the issue of two Aboriginal heritage sites, containing rock art and shelters, located north of the site. TP responded that he knew of the sites and that they were further north, well away, from operations.

BB also spoke of platypus habitat located on Lawson Creek, which he noted was highly linked to Aboriginal heritage. That area will need monitoring.

At the end of the discussion, TC requested that Bowdens provide critical information before meetings, 1-2 weeks in advance, so that CCC members can approach the community and seek input on what we have received. BH agreed to this.

ACTION: Bowdens to provide information to committee members 1-2 weeks prior to future meetings.

DR thanked JR, BH and TP for attending.

7. SOCIAL IMPACT MANAGEMENT PLAN (SIMP) WORKSHOP (see attached presentation)

SB thanked everyone for allowing her to come to speak to the CCC. She began by informing members that Umwelt were in the early stages of developing the SIMP. Need to consider strategies and ideas and understand preferences for engagement on implementation of the plan.

SB then provided an introduction to Umwelt, observing that the SIMP function is led by Dr Sheridan Coakes. Members then listened to SB describe the following issues:

The project process timeline

- Purpose of a SIMP
- SIMP contents and elements
- Engagement to Inform a SIMP
- The community investment program (CIP)
- The Good Neighbor Program
- Local Business and Services Strategy
- Workforce Accommodation and Employment
- Education and Training
- Community Health Research and Monitoring Program
- Property Mitigation Program
- Planning Agreement
- Reflections and Discussion
- Monitoring Social Impacts
- Next Steps – SIMP development

DR thanked SB on her presentation and opened up discussion from CCC members. Members agreed to focus discussion on what was covered on the “Engagement to Inform a SIMP” slide; in particular, how could Umwelt engage with the wider community as well as who should Umwelt be engaging with.

SB noted that engagement with the community will be an important part of developing the SIMP and, as part of the process, the community will be informed of the role and purpose of a SIMP. stated that holding community discussions should help and inform people. JL advised that Umwelt needs to engage with community members as the impact of the silver mine is much wider than what we perceived originally. It is also important, he noted, that so many things have changed since the EIS was submitted. For the community to assess the impacts during consultation, the location of infrastructure needs to be clearly detailed.

BB said it was encouraging to see slides on school children, workers camp, and talks with local Aboriginal parties, local employment. He noted that consultation with Aboriginal groups would need to be undertaken in an appropriate and sensitive manner. He and SB exchanged contact details to discuss this further.

BB advised that consultation needed to take place with the Rural Fire Service in Lue and Rylstone. JL agreed that a resident meeting should take place with a high quality slide presentation, incorporating what is the latest design and for the community to be able to see where the road is going and where it joins Lue Road. Need to provide precise details on power lines, roads, new intersection.

DR observed to SB that it sounded like it would be important to consider during consultation design how the wider community is educated on the issues that SB raised as well as the siting of infrastructure.

DR invited RP to speak about Council. RP stated that he approached the SIMP in a way that means members did not need to know the final details of the mine to have an understanding of the impacts that it will have on things like traffic flow, accommodation, amenity, water, First Nations People. He used the realignment of Maloney's Rd as an example. He observed that, with regards to the SIMP, it did not matter if the road came out on Lue Rd at "point A" or "point B". But he noted that the members know there will be impacts. So, he stated that what Council wants in the SIMP is what those impacts will be, how they will be communicated and managed for those who are affected, both initially and ongoing.

RP - Need to also consider those people affected most by noise, temporary workers' accommodation, how water supply will be provided, what other services are needed, health, impacts of construction on communities like Kandas and Rylstone. Fire control.

JL – How do they know, where to get the information?

RP continued talking about anticipated cumulative impacts associated not only with the mine, but also the renewable energy zone (REZ) for the central west. He observed that will have a huge impact on the size of the workforce coming and going. That means that consideration needs to be given to roads, transport, education, codes of conduct, or trucks going through the village during school hours, for example.

BB – Other groups in the community that need to be considered are those who work in tourism for the region – olive oil growers, accommodation, Air B&B's. What are the impacts and how should they be quantified.

TC – CEO of Bowdens has bought local pub. That will impact on tourists being able to stay there as only mine workers are expected to be filling the rooms.

RP stated that Mid Western Council had engaged a study to be undertaken on how the various significant developments will affect the region. By 2031, it is forecast that there will be 9000 extra people around this area. This creates issues with respect to the provision of water, power, accommodation, rubbish, sewage.

ACTION: RP to forward document to CCC members.

BB – SIMP will need to consider the affordability of accommodation. Workers are illegally camping on sides of roads. Council infrastructure is not in place and there are increased accommodation prices in region. Employers must have a Code of Conduct.

Members then summarised their advice for SB regarding SIMP community consultation. Those most affected should have one on ones. Cumulative impacts need to be proactively considered. SC recommended that Rylstone and Mudgee should each have a workshop with Lue having more than one workshop.

TC advised that a meeting should take place with Mudgee Region Action Group before the wider consultation takes place. He observed there is a bad taste in some peoples' mouths. So, an initial meeting with the Action Group is important if Umwelt is to build trust.

As members received SB's contact details, DR reminded people to reach out to her should any other ideas come to mind.

SB – I am happy to take on board. If the CCC wants another session, SB stated she is very happy to come back.

SC stated that Mudgee District Environmental Group, Lue Rural Fire Service, Fire Control should be consulted.

SB – Thank you all for your time and comments.

8. NEXT MEETING

DR advised he did not know when the next meeting will take place. Travel safe and take care.

ACTION: DR to give CCC members a month's notice of the next meeting.

Meeting closed at 7.25 pm

Appendix One: Actions from Meeting

	Action	Date Raised
1	DR to seek feedback during next CCC meeting from members regarding his chairing	26 March
2	TP to change the legend on each map to include the various acronyms used and forward to members	26 March
3	DR to discuss progress on the locating of stations with Bowdens and communicate to CCC members before next meeting	26 March
4	Bowdens to provide information to committee members 1-2 weeks prior to future meetings	26 March
5	RP to forward document to CCC members	26 March
6	DR to give CCC members a month's notice of the next meeting	26 March