



Professor Mary O’Kane AC
Chair - Independent Planning Commission
Via email: mary.okane@ipcn.nsw.gov.au

22 December 2022

Dear Professor O’Kane

Bowdens Silver Project (SSD 5765)

The Department has completed its assessment of the merits of the Bowdens Silver Project (SSD 5765) and is referring the application to the Independent Planning Commission (the Commission) for determination as there were more than 50 submissions objecting to the project.

The Minister for Planning has also requested the Commission hold a public hearing into the carrying out of the project.

The project would involve the development of an open cut silver, lead and zinc mine in the Mid-Western Regional Council area. The project would involve extracting and processing up to 2 million tonnes of ore per year to produce a silver/lead concentrate and a zinc concentrate. The total project life would be 23 years, including seven years for rehabilitation.

The applicant amended the application twice during the assessment process. The first amendment was to include the realignment of a 500 kV transmission line that traverses the mine site as part of the application. The second amendment involved changes to the water management strategy (including water infrastructure on site) and the removal of an approximately 60 km long water pipeline from the application. The second amendment also changed the proposed alignment of the 500 kV transmission line to address concerns about visual impacts.

The Department exhibited the original application from 2 June 2020 until 27 July 2020, and exhibited the amended application for 28 days in mid 2021 (the first amendment) and 14 days in early 2022 (the second amendment).

The Department received 1,905 public submissions during the original exhibition, with around 79% in support (1,835 submissions) and 20% opposed (384 submissions).

The Department received a further 130 submissions during the exhibition of the first amendment and 256 submissions during the exhibition of the second amendment. The majority of the submissions received on the amendments objected to the project (92% on the first amendment and 87% on the second amendment).

Objections to the project were primarily concerned with potential health impacts of the projects (primarily from lead) and from impacts on water resources, amenity, traffic, biodiversity, and social impacts. Submissions in support commented on the economic benefits of the project, including employment generation and the payment of royalties to the NSW Government.

The Department's detailed assessment of the project has been informed by expert advice from Government agencies and independent experts in the field of health impact assessment, groundwater modelling, surface water balance modelling, acid mine drainage, economics and social impact assessments.

Based on this assessment, the Department considers that the project would provide employment and economic benefits to the local and regional economies, royalties to the NSW government, and would be consistent with the NSW Minerals Strategy. Bowdens Silver has designed the project in a manner that achieves a good balance between maximising the recovery of a mineral resource of State significance and minimising the potential environmental impacts.

The Department considers that the potential impacts can be largely minimised or mitigated and the project is approvable subject to the recommended conditions.

I have attached a copy of the Department's assessment report and recommended conditions of consent for the Commission's consideration. A copy of the Minister's request for a public hearing is also attached.

If you have any questions or wish to arrange a briefing, please contact me on 0477 345 626 or by email at stephen.odonoghue@planning.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S O'Donoghue', written in a cursive style.

Steve O'Donoghue
Director Resource Assessments