



Our ref: DOC20/991223

Senders ref: SSD 10367

Philip Nevill
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Department of Planning, Industry & Environment
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Via email: philip.nevill@planning.nsw.gov.au

29 March 2021

Dear Mr Nevill

Subject: Cowal Gold Operations Underground Development (SSD 10367) – Response to Submissions on the Environmental Impact Statement

Thank you for your seeking comments from the Biodiversity and Conservation Division (BCD) of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment about the Response to Submissions (RTS) on the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Cowal Gold Operations Underground Development (SSD 10367)

BCD has reviewed the RTS and considers that the response addresses biodiversity issues raised in our comments on the EIS (13 November 2020). Our main concern was potential for subsidence in the underground development causing impacts on threatened species through loss of surface water and wetland habitat in Lake Cowal. We requested an independent hydrogeological expert assessment of the mitigation methods proposed by the proponent. The Resource Regulator (Mining Engineering, Department of Regional NSW, AREQ0016072, 25 March 2021) has advised that Appendix E of the EIS (Subsidence Assessment - Beck Engineering 2020) is sufficient and that the proposed mitigation and controls are appropriate and acceptable. Based on this advice, BCD considers there is negligible risk of wetland habitat loss and associated impacts to threatened species.

We recommend that if approved, the conditions of consent include rigorous monitoring of subsidence mitigation methods to ensure that any risk of stope failure is detected early and remedied accordingly.

If you have any questions about this advice, please contact me via rog.southwest@environment.nsw.gov.au or 02 6022 0623.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Fisher'.

Andrew Fisher
Senior Team Leader Planning
South West Branch
Biodiversity and Conservation Division
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment