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31 March 2026

NSW Department of Planning

Submission Concerning Cadia Mod. 16

To whom it may concern

I'm writing this submission on behalf of Environmentally Concerned Citizens of Orange (ECCO). We're a community-based, not-for-profit organisation committed to promoting environmental values in Orange and surrounding district. As such, we've been closely following environmental issues associated with Cadia Mine. We have serious concerns about the new tailings technology proposed for Cadia mining operations under Mod 16. We're also concerned about the consultation process that was meant to inform the community about the nature of the technology.

We understand that the process for which approval is sought is hydrocyclone sands. If approved, we're concerned that this process will have a significant environmental impact on surrounding water sources through increased acidification of mine discharge. Acidification is already occurring in water sources around the mine, and Cadia is located within the catchment of significant water resources that contribute to the Murray Darling basin. This being the case, every effort must be taken to ensure that no toxic pollution occurs through runoff associated with mining operations. We believe this can't be guaranteed using the hydro cyclonic process.

We understand that the Cadia Mod. 16 proponents intend to use the hydrocyclone sands process for buttressing of the Cadia north tailings dam wall. This process is not recommended for areas which have a high degree of seismic activity, and is prohibited in countries such as Chile, where seismic activity is common. It is well known that the Cadia precinct experiences seismic activity, which is reported to have increased since large scale mining began in the district. Because of this, the hydrocyclone process would not appear to be appropriate.

In the case of Mod. 16, the level of community consultation leaves a lot to be desired. Community consultation has been limited to drop-in sessions only. This seems inadequate based on our experience, as many community members are reluctant to express concerns in such an environment. Frequently such sessions are poorly attended but can be claimed by proponents as constituting community consultation. Proper community consultation needs to occur in the form of public meetings with opportunities for participants to ask questions

requiring comprehensive responses available to the entire community. In relation to the current Mod. 16 application, there are many questions with few answers.

In conclusion, ECCO urges the NSW Department of Planning not to give approval for the Cadia Mod. 16. This is on the grounds that the technology for which approval has been sought is inappropriate as it has the potential to further pollute surrounding water resources, and ultimately streams and rivers that flow into the Murray Darling basin. The hydrocyclone sands process is not appropriate for tailings dam buttressing as it is not recommended for areas which have considerable seismic activity. ECCO is also concerned that the public consultation carried out is inadequate. We would suggest that the proponents revisit the issue with a view to the implementation of best practice that priorities environmental safety and appropriate public consultation.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Nugent
ECCO President