

Dr Mandana Mazaheri
Senior Environmental Assessment Officer
Resource & Energy Assessments - Planning Services
Department of Planning & Environment
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

mandana.mazaheri@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mandana

**Cowal Gold Operations – Modification 14
Review of Environmental Assessment including Economic Assessment**

I refer to your email dated 12 April 2018 inviting the Division of Resources & Geoscience (the Division) and the Resources Regulator to provide comments on the Cowal Gold Operations – Modification 14 (the Project or Modification) request for review of Environmental Assessment (EA) submitted by Evolution (Cowal) Pty Limited (the Proponent).

The Division has reviewed the adequacy of information supplied in relation to the abovementioned Project and notes that there is no change to the current published resources. The Modification does not propose changes to the spatial extent (surface area or depth) of the existing/approved open pit. An Economic Assessment detailing the economic benefits to the State is at Attachment 1.

The Division notes that an extension of the Project boundary to include a new mining lease, as stated by the Proponent, to the northwest of the approved Project boundary has been proposed. The Division considers from available information (i.e. information provided as part of this modification and exploration and mining reports that have been provided to the Division previously) that subsequent placement of soil stockpiles in the proposed mining lease area should not result in significant resource sterilisation.

Biodiversity offsets have the potential to preclude access for future resource discovery and extraction and could also potentially permanently sterilise access to mineral resources. The Division notes that four additional biodiversity offset areas are being proposed as part of the modification. The Division has reviewed the proposed locations of the additional offset areas and considers (from available information) that resource sterilisation in these areas to be minimal.

The Resources Regulator's *Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements* (SEARs) for Rehabilitation have been adequately addressed in the Project EA.

The Resources Regulator has determined that sustainable rehabilitation outcomes can be achieved as a result of the Project and that any identified risks or opportunities can be effectively regulated through the conditions of mining authorities issued under the *Mining Act 1992*.

The Division and Resources Regulator require a review of the draft development consent conditions prior to finalisation and any granting of development consent.

For further enquiries regarding this matter please contact:

Adam W. Banister
Senior Advisor (Resources Development & Operations)
Royalties & Advisory Services | Division of Resources & Geoscience
(02) 4931 6439 | advisory.services@planning.nsw.gov.au

Yours sincerely



Matt Gagan
Manager Royalties & Advisory Services
Division of Resources & Geoscience
8 May 2018