



Mr Howard Reed
Manager Mining Projects
Department of Planning and Infrastructure
GPO Box 39
SYDNEY NSW 2001

Attention: Sara Wilson

Dear Mr Reed

**Northparkes Extension Project (MP 11_0600)
Environmental Assessment**

I refer to your email of 8 July 2013 regarding the Rio Tinto application for the continuation of the Northparkes copper - gold mine including the extension of two existing underground operations, underground development of the E22 open cut and five new open cut operations. If approved, this extension will increase the ore processing rate to 8.5 Mtpa and extend the mine life by seven years out to 2032.

NSW Trade & Investment, Regional Infrastructure & Services, Division of Resources & Energy (DRE) has reviewed the *Northparkes Mines Step Change Project Environmental Assessment* (EA) dated July 2013 and provides the following comments which are directed at specific areas of DRE responsibility for this proposal.

MINING TITLE

As copper and gold are prescribed minerals under the *Mining Act 1992*, the proponent is required to hold appropriate mining titles from DRE in order to mine this mineral.

Under the *Mining Act 1992*, mining and rehabilitation are regulated by conditions included in the mining lease, including requirements for the submission of a Mining Operations Plan (MOP) prior to the commencement of operations, and subsequent Annual Environmental Management Reports (AEMR).

MINERAL RESOURCES

The EA would normally be required to include the resource present within each of the new open cuts/block caves, a mining schedule, detailed cross-sections through the new open cuts showing resource utilisation, and ore and waste rock mineralogy. However, as this proposal is an existing mine and the extension will better utilise the existing resource within the mine area, the mineral resource information provided is considered satisfactory.

RECOMMENDED CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

DRE recommends that the following conditions be incorporated into the Development Consent, if granted:

Rehabilitation and Mine Closure

The EA meets DRE requirements with regard to its description of the project and the identification and management of environmental issues. In particular the EA adequately describes the rehabilitation techniques, post mining landforms, management of topsoil, and revegetation and monitoring.

DRE places particular importance on returning mines to a safe, stable and non polluting landform, and ensuring that these rehabilitated landforms are returned to an acceptable end use. In this respect, DRE is supportive of the rehabilitation end use proposals submitted in the EA.

The Proponent must prepare and implement a Rehabilitation Plan to the satisfaction of the Director General of Department of Trade & Investment, Regional Infrastructure & Services. The Rehabilitation Plan must:

- a) be prepared in accordance with DRE guidelines;
- b) be submitted and approved by the Director General of Department of Trade & Investment, Regional Infrastructure & Services prior to the commencement of activities;
- c) address all aspects of rehabilitation and mine closure, including post mining land use assessment, rehabilitation objectives, completion criteria and rehabilitation monitoring;
- d) include a final landform design that is consistent with the surrounding topography of the area and considers natural drainage design and relief patterns and principles.
- e) address all aspects of rehabilitation and mine closure, including post mining land use assessment, rehabilitation objectives, completion criteria and rehabilitation monitoring.
- f) A review of the rehabilitation security bond will also be undertaken prior to project commencement.

Mining Operations Plan

If the Northparkes Extension Project is approved, the project will be required to submit and have approved a Mining Operations Plan (MOP) prepared in accordance with the Division of Resources & Energy (DRE) MOP guidelines.

These guidelines can be obtained from the DRE webpage:

<http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/environment/pgf>; or alternatively from the ESU office in Orange NSW.

The new MOP will need to refine strategies outlined in the EA to ensure that the stated environmental management, rehabilitation, final landform and land use objectives can be achieved. The MOP must be submitted prior to the

commencement of surface disturbing activities for the new extension project areas. Progress against the MOP will be required to be reported in the Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR).

DRE does not object to the approval of the proposed modification provided the above recommendations are taken into account and implemented.

DRE is available to meet with the Proponent to assist in developing the above documents for their proposed operation.

Should you have any enquires regarding this matter please contact Steve Cozens, Senior Project Officer, Industry Coordination on (02) 8281 7335.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Delany', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Adrian Delany
Acting Director
Industry Coordination

21.8.13