

Philip Nevill
Senior Environmental Assessment Officer
Department of Planning, Industry & Environment

Via: Major Project Portal

Dear Mr Nevill

Re. Cowal Gold Operations Underground Development (SSD-10367) and Modification 16 - Surface changes to support the Underground Development (DA14/98-Mod-16)

I refer to your requests of 10 October 2020 for advice regarding the Cowal Gold Operations Underground Development. The Resources Regulator has reviewed both the requests for advice on the EIS and on Modification 16 report.

The Regulator notes that the Cowal Gold Mine underground development EIS and modification 16 proposes the following:

- extension of mine life to 2040
- excavation of two declines and associated stopes
- development of a box cut
- development of a paste fill plant
- increase in the IWL height by 1m

Assessment

Based on the review of the EIS and modification report, the Resources Regulator advises that it has not identified any specific concerns regarding mine safety or mine rehabilitation matters in relation to the proposals.

Limitations

It should be noted that the Resources Regulator does not provide any endorsement of the proposed rehabilitation methodologies presented in the EIS. Under the conditions of a mining authority granted under the *Mining Act 1992*, the Resources Regulator requires an authority holder to adopt a risk-based approach to achieving the required rehabilitation outcomes.

The applicability of the controls to achieve effective and sustainable rehabilitation is to be determined based on site-specific risk assessments conducted by the authority holder. An authority holder may also be directed by the Resources Regulator to implement further risk control measures required to achieve effective rehabilitation outcomes during the life of the mine.

Regulatory requirements if approved

The proponent has acknowledged that a revised Mining Operations Plan (MOP) is required prior to the commencement of the activities described in the Modification.

As part of the submission of the MOP the Resources Regulator will assess the risk associated with rehabilitation of the TSF/IWL in relation to the chemical and physical suitability of materials used in construction and capping to achieve the final land form and associated land use.

The Resources Regulator will also undertake assessments of the mine operators' proposed mining activities under clause 33 of the Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2014 as well as other WHS regulatory obligations.

Background

The Mining Act Inspectorate within the Resources Regulator has responsibility for providing strategic advice on environmental issues as they relate to or affect mine rehabilitation.

The Mine Safety Inspectorate within the Resources Regulator is responsible for ensuring the mine operators' compliance with the Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation, in particular the effective management of risks associated with the principal hazards as specified in the *Work Health and Safety (Mines and Petroleum Sites) Regulation 2014*.

Contact

Should you require any further information or clarification, please contact the Office of the Executive Director (ED.ResourcesRegulator@planning.nsw.gov.au)

Yours sincerely,



Anthony Keon
Executive Director
Resources Regulator

1 December 2020