

# COWAL GOLD OPERATIONS COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING & CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023-2024

## Cowal Gold Operations Community Environmental Monitoring & Consultative Committee

<b>CCC / Project Name:</b>	Cowal Gold Operations	<b>Reporting Period:</b>	April 2022 to April 2024
<b>Independent Chairperson:</b>	<b>Lisa Andrews</b>	<b>Proponent Contact:</b>	<b>Renee Pettit</b>

### 1. Executive Summary

The Cowal Gold Operations is located approximately 38 kilometres north-east of West Wyalong in New South Wales (NSW), owned and operated by Evolution Mining (Cowal) Pty Limited.

The project was originally approved in 1999 and mining operations commenced in April 2005. Several companies have owned the mine (Rio Tinto, Homestake Australia, Barrick and now Evolution).

The CEMCC is the oldest community consultative committee in New South Wales, operating originally under its own charter with strict environmental monitoring requirements. The CEMCC resolved to operate under the Department of Planning's Community Consultative Committee Guidelines for State Significant Developments, when they were introduced in November 2018 and continues to operate under the revised guidelines.

The project is located within three local government areas, and therefore has a large membership, comprising of:

- Four local community representatives (including a representative from the Lake Cowal Land Owners group)
- One Bland Shire Council delegate
- One Parkes Shire Council delegate
- One Forbes Shire Council delegate (and alternate)
- Stakeholder Group – Wiradjuri Condobolin Corporation
- Three company representatives; and
- One Independent Chairperson.

The Independent Scientist who has been on the CEMCC since its original establishment, retired in 2023. On checking the conditions of consent, it was not a formal requirement for this position to be on the committee, therefore it was not replaced. It should be noted that the improvements over the years of monitoring equipment, regulatory inspections, compliance and licencing requirements by agencies such as EPA, DPHI Compliance, Resources Regulator, etc has continued to ensure the mine operates safely and in accordance with the project approval.

The meetings are held quarterly, in March, June, August and December.

Attendees receive a comprehensive presentation from the proponent, which included updates on the modification applications, expansion project (underground) and exploration decline.

Topics of discussion during the reporting period included:

- Environmental Monitoring Results (air quality, blasting, surface water, lake water, ground water, operational noise, fauna & flora)
- Environmental Management Plan updates

- Rainfall
- Cyanide
- Fauna Incidents (deaths, etc)
- Lake Cowal levels
- Rehabilitation
- Reportable Incidents
- Complaints Report
- Bush Fire Management
- Assurance Auditors (Recertification for ISO14001)
- Open Cut Continuation Project
- CGO Exploration Update
- Community Relations (complaints)
- Scholarships & Employee Achievements
- NSW Women in Mining Awards
- Cowal Newsletter
- Accommodation Village
- Sponsorship and donations; and
- Community Engagement.
- The CCC received a presentation by the Independent Chairperson on the Department of Planning's revised guidelines for SSD CCCs; outlining the changes and providing an opportunity to reinforce the objectives of the CCC and role of members. The members of the CCC have developed a specific Terms of Reference for this committee as well as completed the necessary governance forms (Pecuniary Interest Declarations and Code of Conduct), which will be reviewed annually.

The CCC meets in alternate locations (West Wyalong, Forbes, Condobolin & on site at Lake Cowal, which includes a site inspection) to cover the three local government areas and is an effective communication forum between the community, the Councils and the company. It functions well and accordingly, fulfils its objectives under the Department's guidelines.

## 2. CCC activities over last 12 months

- Attendance at the meetings is high, with the occasional apology due to competing commitments.
- There were no joint CCC's held.

## 3. Key issues

Trending topics of committee discussion can be summarised as:

Issue	Actions Taken	Outcome
<b>Rehabilitation Work</b>	Presentation on the Rehabilitation Works Management Plan.	Ongoing updates provided at CEMCC meetings.
<b>Promotion of CEMCC activities</b>	Suggested by community members to place an article in newspaper following each quarterly meeting to inform broader community of the CEMCC & proponent's activities	To be considered by Evolution.
<b>Cowal Newsletter</b>	Recent launch of Cowal Newsletter showcasing female leaders and their careers	Distributed.

<b>Independent Environmental Audit</b>	The IEA has been commissioned.	CCC members encouraged to provide any issues of interest to Chair for forwarding on to consultant.
<b>Cowal Open Pit Continuation Project</b>	Still under assessment with DPHIE.	Members have been consulted throughout the application process, including engagement with consultants. Keep CEMCC informed.
<b>Exploration Update</b>	Interest in other minerals being found on site.	Information provided to members.
<b>Lake Cowal "Inhabitat" Development</b>	Incorporated with the Lake Cowal Conservation Centre – proposed 15 permanent eco-tents and associated buildings to cater for environmental tourism.	Presentation provided at September 2023 meeting.
<b>Construction of Accommodation Village for UG workers</b>	Village located in West Wyalong to house underground miners.	Site inspection undertaken of completed village following September 2023 meeting.

#### 4. Focus for next 12 months

The planned activities for 2024 will be guided by the contributions of the CCC members. These activities are likely to include:

- A site inspection in September 2024.
- Continued updates on environmental monitoring and results.
- Continued updates on the Exploration Decline.
- Engagement with the community regarding the proposed Open Pit Continuation application before DPHI, including Social Impact Assessment.
- Success of the "Inhabitat" eco-tourism facility on the shores of Lake Cowal.
- Continued updates on Community Engagement & Support Programs.

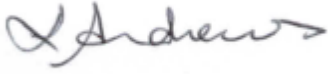
To the best of my knowledge, there are no outstanding or emerging issues that have not been addressed.

CEMCC minutes and presentations are available on the project website.

#### Review of Effectiveness of the CEMCC

In accordance with the revised CCC guidelines, it is deemed that the CEMCC operates effectively. The proponent provides comprehensive presentations, ongoing notifications, timely responses to requests and completion of action items. There have been no concerns raised by CEMCC members.

*Note: The Independent Chairperson that took over this CEMCC in 2017 stepped down from this committee at the beginning of 2024 and a replacement Chair has been appointed by DPHI.*

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	25 April 2024