

Submission  
No 74

**INQUIRY INTO CURRENT AND POTENTIAL IMPACTS OF  
GOLD, SILVER, LEAD AND ZINC MINING ON HUMAN  
HEALTH, LAND, AIR AND WATER QUALITY IN NEW  
SOUTH WALES**

**Organisation:** Evolution Mining

**Date Received:** 5 September 2023

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## **NSW Parliamentary Inquiry: Evolution Mining - Submission**

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### **Inquiry into current and potential impacts of gold, silver, lead and zinc mining on human health, land, air and water quality in New South Wales**

Formed in November 2011, Evolution Mining Limited (Evolution) has evolved to become a leading, globally relevant gold mining company, inclusive of copper production and other metalliferous by-products. The Company owns and operates five mines in Australia and Canada, with one operation located in NSW.

Evolution's commitment to Sustainability, Health, Safety and Wellbeing is and always has been fundamental to our business. Guided by our Sustainability purpose, we foster trusted partnerships that enable safe, reliable and sustainable operations centred on the wellbeing of our people, the environment and the communities in which we operate. We take pride in managing our business in a way that creates value for all stakeholders.

At Evolution, we place environmental and social concerns at the forefront of our operations and integrate these into our strategic decision making. We identify, understand and manage the potential risks and impact of our operations on the environment and society and are deeply connected to our local communities, with approximately 75% of our workforce living locally. We recognise that partnering with our neighbours, First Nation peoples and local communities allows us to achieve improved outcomes in health, community infrastructure, services and education in the communities in which we operate.

Evolution operates a strong system of governance, including an ISO14001-certified Environmental Management System and robust Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) reporting processes which aligns with the principles of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and United Nations Global Compact. Our high levels of transparency have been recognised by key ratings agencies including the Dow Jones Sustainability Index Australia and we are proud to have the highest rating among global mining peers.

Notwithstanding, we seek to operate beyond legal compliance through the application of the precautionary principle to deliver against our social licence obligations and strive for leading practice to meet community expectations. We actively monitor and report our performance across all key metrics of health, safety, environment, water, emissions, First Nation engagement, community, risk and progress on our Net Zero commitments.

Evolution is proactive in our commitment to emission reduction and management of climate change related risks. This is visible in both the targets that have been set and our demonstrated commitment to Australia's renewable targets. Notably, we are progressing the proposed development of the Mt Rawdon pumped hydro project, to be delivered pre-2030, post closure of this mining operation. In addition, we are conducting a technical study – enabled by a grant received from the Federal Government as part of Australia's Critical Minerals Strategy and Development Program - to extract cobalt from mine waste at an existing mining operation in Queensland.

Evolution is an active and engaged member of various Industry bodies including the NSW Minerals Council (NSWMC) and supports its submission on this Inquiry. Further to the submission from the NSWMC, Evolution provides the following comments:

## Evolution Mining - NSW Response to Parliamentary Enquiry

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- The NSW regulatory framework is comprehensive and more stringent than the other jurisdictions in Australia and Canada in which Evolution operates.
- The NSW regulatory framework has multiple government agencies and independent experts appropriately and actively engaged in modifications/expansions of existing mines and the assessment of proposed new mines.
- Government regulators such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), NSW Resources Regulator and Natural Resources Access Regulator, as well as independent environmental auditors, oversee and monitor ongoing compliance throughout all phase of a mine's life. This is welcomed and supported by Evolution.
- The NSW Government is a signatory to the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air Quality Measure (Air NEPM) and has adopted the Air NEPM particulate criteria, the desired environmental outcome of which is to ensure adequate protection of human health.
- EPA/Air NEPM criterion of annual PM2.5 (of most concern from a human health perspective) is stricter than the World Health Organisation, European and United States standards for annual PM2.5 (EPA 2024).
- In Evolution's experience, the Department of Planning and Environment and EPA are prompt in responding to complaints and concerns from communities, and comprehensive in their approach. Evolution respects this and seeks to support all relevant government bodies in their activities and engagement, as required.
- We are committed to proactive and regular engagement with our communities to build lasting relationships based on trust and transparency. For us, this entails active listening, taking community needs into account as we conduct our business safely and responsibly and providing regular updates and information tailored to stakeholder needs. We openly discuss any concerns that may arise and are committed to doing so with mutual understanding and respect.
- To help achieve this, we purposefully establish a physical presence within our community and look to participate in and contribute to the community wherever we can. In establishing a town office, we seek be easily accessible to our community stakeholders to complement our digital presence and ensure that newsletter updates are regular and relevant.
- Community Consultative Committees, Working Groups and other Committees are established with representation from a broad range of stakeholders including neighbours and local landholders. In addition to being proactive in our approach, we seek to assist in times of community need – such as the recent floods in the Riverina - and pride ourselves on being an active member of the community.
- NSW requires open and transparent publication of Management Plans, monthly published EPL monitoring data (including compliance data), Annual Review (overview of all activities under DA 14/98 and SSD 10367, including MPs), statutory audits, and other activities that are made available to the regulator, government agencies and the general public via the Evolution website: [www.evolutionmining.com](http://www.evolutionmining.com) . All reporting data is published online in a timely manner and made available in both printed and digital format.



## Evolution Mining - NSW Response to Parliamentary Enquiry

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- The Resources Regulator engages proactively and frequently, with semi-annual site visits. The Targeted Assessment Programs (TAPs) are an excellent example of proactive industry benchmarking of rehabilitation practices and standards across the industry.
- Our operations work closely with all relevant regulators, including participating in onsite inspections and visits and delivering our annual rehabilitation reporting. This includes a forward program which includes the mining and rehabilitation activities for the next three years with a focus on demonstrating how rehabilitation will occur as reasonably practicable after disturbance.

In summary, Evolution acknowledges the efforts of the NSW Government, by the way of this Inquiry, to ensure the NSW metals sector is operating within the existing, fit-for-purpose regulatory framework. In doing so, we are committed to our sustainability purpose: to deliver long-term stakeholder value through safe, reliable, low-cost gold production in an environmentally and socially responsible way.

For and on behalf of Evolution Mining Limited.

Evan Elstein  
Company Secretary