



Ringwood Rd
Wollar NSW 2850
www.cwecouncil.com

Friday 29 January 2016

Water Trigger Review
GPO Box 787
Canberra ACT 2601

Submission

Central West Environment Council (CWEC) is an umbrella organisation representing conservation groups and individuals in central west NSW working to protect the local environment for future generations.

CWEC supports the 'water trigger' regulation under the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) and recommends that it be extended to include the impacts of mineral extraction such as gold and silver and other metals, rather than being restricted to coal and coal seam gas developments.

The expansion of the gold mining industry in Central West NSW is having a major impact on access to water resources, water sharing arrangements in drought and the health of river systems in the region.

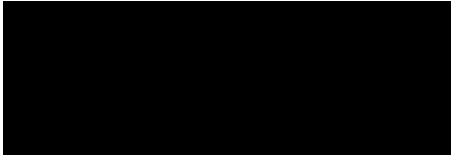
Large scale gold mining operations such as the Cadia Mine near Orange had a significant impact on water sources and other water users during the Millenium Drought.

A new gold mine proposal in the region has approached Bathurst City Council to purchase the effluent water that is treated to provide environmental flows in the Macquarie River between Bathurst and Burrendong Dam.

CWEC believes that the long term water security for agricultural industries and towns in the Central West is under threat from the expansion of the gold mining industry.

We recommend the extension of the water trigger to assess the cumulative impact of all mining operations on regional water sources. The Independent Expert Science Committee needs to be part of the assessment and decision-making process for all major extractive industries.

Yours sincerely

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President