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15 August 2006

The Director General  
c/- David Kitto  
Department of Planning  
Major Development Assessment  
23-33 Bridge Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear David,

**Independent Monitoring Panel - Cowal Gold Project**

We refer to your letter of 6th July 2006, Cowal Gold Project Annual Report Independent Monitoring Panel (IMP). In that letter you advise of 3 recommendations arising from the second Annual Report of the IMP.

We have provided a response to these recommendations in the following paragraphs.

*Recommendation 1: The timing discrepancy between the reporting schedule for the IMP and the availability of the AEMR needs to be rectified by NSW Department of Planning and Barrick to allow for more timely evaluation of the annual environmental monitoring information by the IMP.*

In accordance with conditions of Barrick's Environmental Protection Licence the Annual Environmental Return (AER) is required to be submitted to the Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) within 60 days of the anniversary date of the Environmental Protection Licence (23 December).

Barrick has received regulatory approval to vary the reporting period and submission date for the Annual Environmental Management Report (AEMR) to align the submission date of this document with the AER. As a result both the AEMR and AER are required to be submitted to regulatory agencies on 21 February.

In order for the IMP to have sufficient time to adequately assess the information contained within both annual reporting documents we recommend that timing for submission of the IMP's State of Environment Report for Lake Cowal be revised by the Department of Planning accordingly.

*Recommendation 2: That Barrick provides more timely resolution of anomalous environmental monitoring results in the future.*

Barrick has developed a quality assurance control process for its environmental sampling programs. This will assist in more timely resolution of any anomalous monitoring results. Within this framework the quality process will include, where appropriate, additional monitoring locations for internal review purposes, review of laboratory analytical methods and third party expert review of the monitoring program and data.

*Recommendation 3: That Barrick comment on whether the suggestions made in February 2005 by the IMP have been acted upon, in particular the adoption of the ANZECC/ARMCANZ Water Quality Guidelines introduced in 2000.*

Barrick intend to commence a review of water quality monitoring programs against the ANZECC/ARMCANZ Water Quality Guidelines and report on this in the 2006 AEMR.

Please contact me should you have any queries in relation to this letter.

Yours sincerely



**DAVID BLAXLAND**  
Environmental Manager  
Cowal Gold Project



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**BARRICK**  
COWAL