Media Release

15 February 2023

Newcrest to trial advanced 4G and 5G mobile at Cadia for safer, smarter and more sustainable mines

Australia's largest gold miner will trial advanced 4G Long-Term Evolution (LTE) and 5G mobile technologies underground at its Cadia mine to assess the potential of cellular delivery of data and video to support a smarter, safer and more sustainable mine. The trial will take place at Newcrest's Cadia Valley Operations (CVO), located in the Cadia Valley about 20 km from the regional city of Orange, New South Wales, Australia.

In partnership with Ericsson and Telstra Purple, Newcrest will deploy a private 4G LTE and 5G trial network in its underground operations at Cadia in coming months. This announcement follows previous engagements where the trio worked to improve communications coverage, performance and safety with private 4G LTE at its Lihir mine in Papua New Guinea, and more recently for surface operations at CVO.

Speaking at the Sweden-Australia Sustainable Mining Summit in Sydney today, CVO General Manager Aaron Brannigan said modern mining is a data-driven business, with technology and digitalisation creating new levels of productivity and safety, greater efficiency and reduced environmental impact.

"In the ongoing quest for productivity, efficiency and safety, Newcrest must use every tool at our disposal to boost performance at site while continuing to ensure that everyone at our mines gets home safely at the end of the day," Mr Brannigan said.

"With 4G and 5G mobile technologies potentially offering better performance and capabilities than Wi-Fi, this trial will help Newcrest to assess its viability for greater coverage, capacity and functionality to support advanced underground automation, our Connected Worker strategy and future growth at Cadia.

"It's an exciting time for Newcrest and for Australian mining, and this is a great practical example of how Australia's biggest industry can leverage Australia's position as a global 5G leader to further drive digitalisation in the mining sector and help develop a smart, safer and more sustainable mine."

The trial will utilise Ericsson's Private 5G (EP5G) solution for Industry 4.0 enterprises to assess different cellular approaches for coverage and capacity needs and deployment economics. It will include the use of various 4G and 5G radio types, massive- and multi-user MIMO (multiple-input-multiple-output) advanced antenna systems for high density and high capacity connectivity requirements, and Uplink Booster technology derived from custom-made Ericsson Silicon system-on-a-chip 5G processors to increase uplink signal strength and data throughput.

Ericsson's Head of Australia and New Zealand, Emilio Romeo said: "5G connectivity will be instrumental in enabling advanced teleremote and autonomous technologies, which are integral to industries such as mining. We're delighted to be working with Newcrest and Telstra Purple to trial Ericsson's 4G LTE and 5G solutions, and enable Newcrest to develop know-how on how to best deploy them underground."

Telstra Purple Digital Transformation Executive Paul Nicholls said: “We’ve been thrilled to see what our 4G LTE and 5G mobile network technologies have been able to do through this project, from supporting wireless mining applications underground, to boosting safety for the local team. These technologies are absolutely transformative for a broad range of industries, and it’s exciting to be part of industry 4.0 innovation in Australia.”

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