

26 March 2024

Natalia Daza-Niño & Caroline Avan  
Business and Human Rights Resource Centre

Dear Natalia and Caroline,

South32 supports and encourages the work of the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre and provides the following response to two articles published by *Radio Francia Internacional* ([Proyecto Rafael 4](#) – 19 April 2023 and [Proyecto Rafael 5](#) – 20 April 2023).

South32's purpose, strategy and values guide not only what we do, but how we do it. We are committed to respecting the rights of people who may be impacted by our activities, including employees, community members and other stakeholders, including human rights defenders. Our commitments and management approach to respecting human rights are described in [Our Approach to Human Rights](#).

South32's internal social performance standard outlines the requirement that operations located in countries where human rights risk is considered high, undertake a human rights impact assessment (HRIA) at least every five years. Operations located in high-risk countries are also required to undertake an annual human rights risk self assessment (HRRSA), except for the years when HRIAs are conducted.

Cerro Matoso has social investment, environmental management and community engagement programs targeted at improving the socio-economic conditions across host communities. In December 2021 South32 published a [case study](#) detailing the initiatives underway to improve socio-economic outcomes and improved environmental management at Cerro Matoso.

As disclosed in South32's FY23<sup>1</sup> [Sustainable Development Report](#), a HRIA for Cerro Matoso was completed in October 2022 by an independent third party engaged by the operation. The HRIA detailed the actual, perceived and potential human rights issues, and provided a gap analysis of Cerro Matoso's human rights practices against international human rights standards.

Included in the assessment was a review of Cerro Matoso's policies, organisational culture, approach to strengthening safety and occupational health, the performance evaluation of contractors and suppliers, training, and implemented measures and controls for environmental and social impact management.

An impact identified in the HRIA included the perceived impacts on the right to health of communities in the region resulting from the activities of Cerro Matoso and other mining companies in the region. Cerro Matoso has established management measures to manage environmental impacts, and the potential risk on human health. This includes monitoring conducted jointly with trained members of the community, and community engagement. Air monitoring results from FY23 were below regulatory requirements and more stringent World Health Organization guidelines. Real time data is published on Cerro Matoso's [website](#).

In FY24 Cerro Matoso committed to, together with members of the community and relevant third parties, identifying measures to enhance the level of involvement of the community in the participatory environmental monitoring program, with the aim of improving trust and transparency.

In FY24 Cerro Matoso will also complete a HRRSA and conduct a review of the action plans from the 2022 HRIA.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: South32 operates on a July-June Financial Year

An update on the human rights due diligence and actions implemented throughout FY24 for South32's operations, including Cerro Matoso, will be included in our FY24 Sustainable Development Report, scheduled for release in August 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Holly B". The letters are cursive and fluid, with a large, stylized 'B' at the end.

Holly Buschman  
VP Sustainability Strategy