Napier gold diggers now have third consultant – a former DME employer

Cienth, the shell company – with no record of relevant activity in mining – that wants to explore for gold on farms outside Napier, has yet another environmental consultant. Napier residents last week found notices attached to farm fences and put up outside Napier's Co-op, under the name Lwethuma Environmental Consultants, informing of Cienth's intent to explore for gold and silver. Tin has now also been added to the mix.

Lwethuma only has a facebook page and no visible record of activity. Even the facebook page is idle, with just a few posts of what might be mining site photos, dating back to 2019, and the line: "We out there ensuring sustainable mining."

Lwethuma's "lead environmentalist" is McDonald Mdhluli. According to his LinkedIN page Mdhluli was formerly an assistant director in the department of mineral resources and energy (DME) in the sub-directorate of mine environmental management. He cites the work he did there as "evaluating applications for environmental authori[s]ation for mining."

The Lwethuma notice – posted on 10 October – kicks off a required 30-day commenting period.

This is the third time Cienth announces its intent to explore outside Napier. The first time it used the consultants Thevha (notice given on 8 June). Thevha was then dumped for Minrom Consulting, ostensibly because Cienth wanted to use a Cape-based consultant "familiar" with the area. Lwethuma is Nelspruit-based.

Mathabo le Roux

Cienth's third go. Photo: Supplied