

Analyst

David Coates 612 8224 2887

Authorisation

Peter Arden 613 9235 1833

Aeon Metals Limited (AML)

Consistent results reinforce exploration upside

Recommendation

Buy (unchanged)

Price

\$0.235

Valuation

\$0.34 (previously \$0.27)

Risk

Speculative

GICS Sector

Materials

Expected Return

Capital growth	44.6%
Dividend yield	0.0%
Total expected return	44.6%

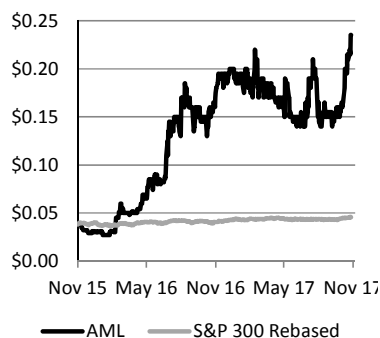
Company Data & Ratios

Enterprise value	\$129.4
Market cap	\$100.1m
Issued capital	400.4m
Free float	79%
Avg. daily val. (52wk)	\$51,40031
12 month price range	\$0.13-\$0.27

Price Performance

	(1m)	(3m)	(12m)
Price (A\$)	0.16	0.20	0.16
Absolute (%)	46.9	17.5	51.6
Rel market (%)	41.9	12.9	36.9

Absolute Price



SOURCE: IRESS

Drilling strike rate maintained

AML has released further assays from its Phase II diamond drilling program at its 100%-owned Walford Creek copper-cobalt-zinc project. They are from hole WFDD265, drilled 200m to the west of the previously released hole WFDD264 and returned:

38m @ 1.07% Cu, 0.15% Co and 26g/t Ag from 226m; including
20m @ 1.41% Cu, 0.16% Co and 25g/t Ag from 244m.

In addition to this we also note the release of drill core photos from hole WFDD270, drilled 900m to the west of the Vardy Resource. Consistent with previous holes drilled in this program, it confirms visual logging of the mineralisation.

Confidence in deposit continues to build

By our measure hole WFDD265 is by some margin the **widest intersection returned grading above 1.00% Cu** in the last 18 months of drilling into the Vardy Zone and is wider than the previously interpreted PY3 dimensions – implying this will be accretive to the current Resource tonnage. At 1.07% Cu it is marginally lower than the current Vardy Resource of 1.25% Cu, though the inclusive intersection of **20m at 1.41% Cu and 0.16% Co** demonstrates high grades continue. This is also consistent with the modelling of high grades in the lower portion of the PY3 unit. Adding to this are the previously drilled intersections of **14m at 2.23% Cu and 0.16% Co** (WFPD185, 50m to the west) and **20m at 1.13% Cu and 0.22% Co** (WFPD184, 200m to the west).

Investment thesis – Buy, (Speculative), valuation \$0.34/sh

AML has entered an exciting period of discovery and growth, during which effective, cost efficient drilling could create significant value through exploration success. The latest results give us the confidence to increase our exploration valuation from \$70m to \$100m – in part based on peer valuations in the market - lifting our valuation to \$0.34/sh from \$0.27/sh. We retain our Buy (Speculative) recommendation.

Earnings Forecast

Year end 30 June	2017a	2018e	2019e	2020e
Sales (A\$m)	-	-	60	120
EBITDA (A\$m)	(8)	(2)	26	55
NPAT (reported) (A\$m)	(8)	(6)	5	27
NPAT (adjusted) (A\$m)	(8)	(6)	5	27
EPS (adjusted) (cps)	(2)	(2)	1	5
EPS growth (%)	na	na	na	372%
PER (x)	(10.6)	(16.4)	22.9	4.8
FCF Yield (%)	-5%	-39%	-28%	19%
EV/EBITDA (x)	(15.5)	(63.9)	5.1	2.3
Dividend (cps)	-	-	-	-
Yield (%)	0%	0%	0%	0%
Franking (%)	0%	0%	0%	0%
ROE (%)	-29%	-21%	10%	34%

SOURCE: BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

Consistent results reinforce exploration upside

Drilling strike rate maintained

AML has released further assays from its Phase II diamond drilling program at its 100%-owned Walford Creek copper-cobalt-zinc project. They are from hole WFDD265, drilled 200m to the west of the previously released hole WFDD264 and returned:

38m @ 1.07% Cu, 0.15% Co and 26g/t Ag from 226m; including

20m @ 1.41% Cu, 0.16% Co and 25g/t Ag from 244m.

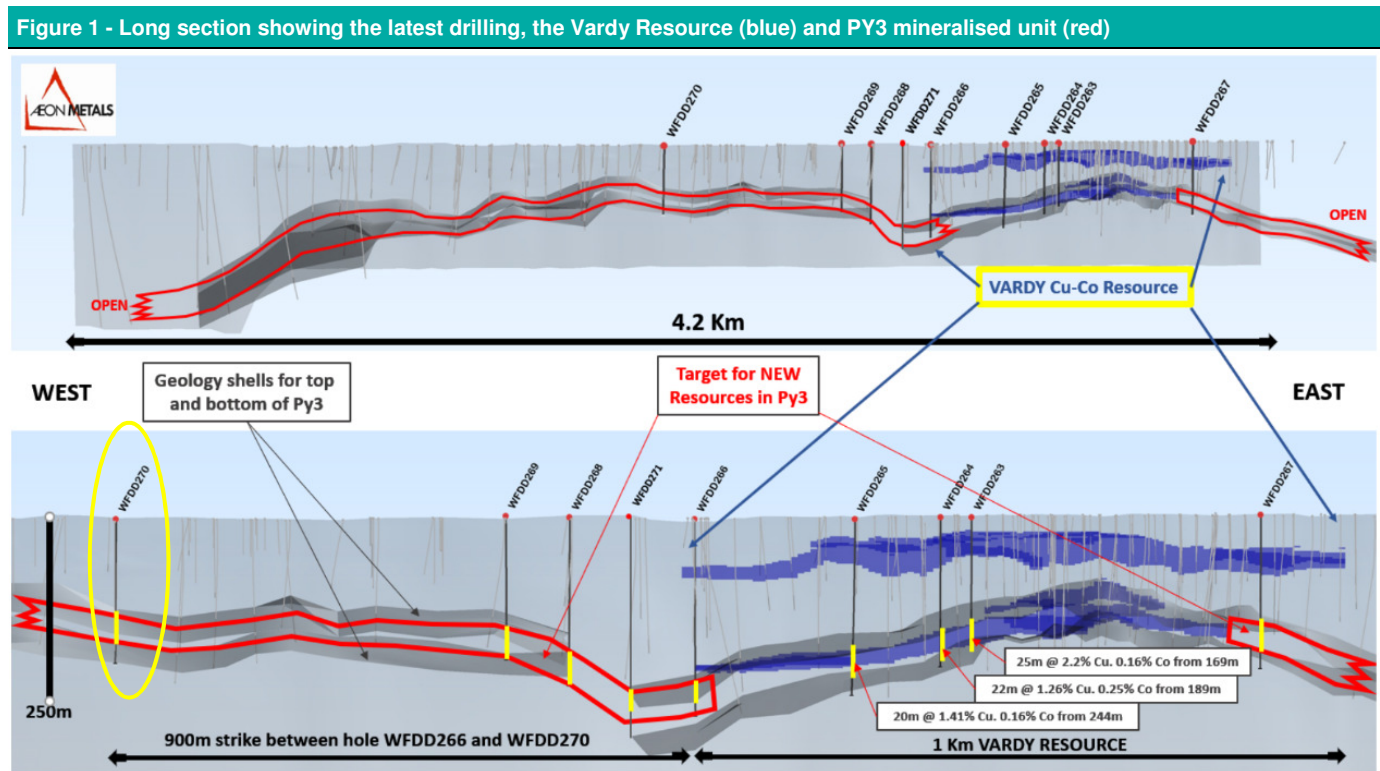
The table below estimates the recovered value of the intersections from hole WFD265 compared with the recovered value from the Vardy Zone Resource.

Hole ID	Intercept (m)	Grades					Recovered value (A\$/t)					
		%Cu	% Co	% Pb	% Zn	Ag g/t	Cu	Co	Pb	Zn	Ag	Total
265	38	1.07%	0.15%	0.55%	0.51%	25.5	\$84	\$57	-	\$16	-	\$156
incl.	20	1.41%	0.16%	0.19%	0.36%	24.6	\$110	\$61	-	\$11	-	\$182
Vardy Resource		1.25%	0.16%	0.74%	0.76%	25.6	\$98	\$62	-	\$24	-	\$183

Price assumptions	US\$/t	US\$/t	US\$/t	US\$/t	US\$/oz
AUD/USD	\$6,500	\$60,000	\$2,500	\$3,300	\$17.00
	0.768				

SOURCE: COMPANY DATA AND BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

In addition to this we also note the release of drill core photos from hole WFDD270, drilled 900m to the west of the Vardy Resource (highlighted below). Consistent with previous holes drilled in this program, it confirms visual logging of the mineralisation.



SOURCE: COMPANY DATA

Changes to our valuation

We make no changes to our risk adjusted NPV-based valuation for the Walford Creek project at this time, other than to roll it forward for FY18, resulting in a 9% uplift. We leave our assumed mining inventory unchanged at 5.1Mt. This allows an additional 2 years of production compared to the PEA, on what we view as likely Resource extension. We point out that this is still less than the current Vardy Zone Resource.

We increase our notional valuation of the balance of AML's exploration tenements at Walford Creek by \$30m, from \$70m to \$100m, given the consistent drilling results and the confirmation of mineralisation 900m to the west of the current Vardy Zone Resource. These results further validate the geological model, increase the prospectivity of the Fish River Fault and increase the likelihood of the definition of high grade strike extensions along it. In doing so we note the 60kt of contained cobalt in AML's global, low grade Resource for the Walford Creek project and its comparison with CleanTeQ Holdings (132kt Co, market capitalisation A\$916m) and Australian Mines (Sconi project 54.5kt Co, market capitalisation A\$320m)

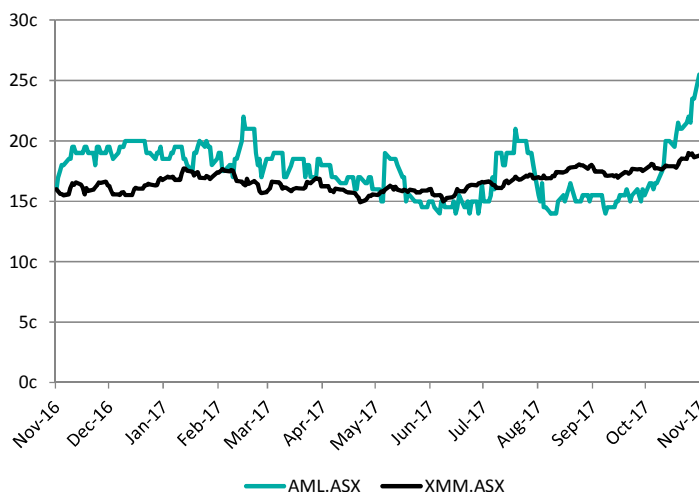
Our near-term earnings outlook remains unchanged, reflecting the ongoing exploration program in-line with our base-case assumptions. Our valuation increases 26% to \$0.34/sh and we retain our Buy (Speculative) recommendation, for upside from the current share price of 44.7%.

Upcoming catalysts

Upcoming catalysts for AML include:

- An ongoing release of drilling results through to early December, which we expect are likely to continue returning high grades;
- Following the completion of the drilling program, AML plans to calculate an updated Resource estimate, which we expect to deliver a material upgrade to the current Resource. Due to longer-than-planned assay turnaround times to date we now expect this in early CY18;
- This will form the basis of a maiden Reserve estimate; and
- The completion of a Bankable Feasibility Study to follow, likely in 1HCY18.

Figure 2 - AML share-price performance vs ASX Metals and Mining (re-based)



SOURCE: IRESS AND BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

Aeon Metals Ltd (AML)

Company description

AML is a Sydney-based company focused on the exploration and development of its flagship asset, the 100%-owned Walford Creek Copper-Cobalt Project, an advanced exploration stage project located approximately 350km north west of Mt Isa, in Queensland. Since acquiring the project in 2014, AML has completed Resource infill and extension drilling, released updated Mineral Resource estimates, progressed permitting activities and completed a Preliminary Economic Assessment. The global Resource at Walford Creek comprises 73.3Mt at 0.40% Cu, 0.85% Zn and 813ppm Co for 296kt Cu, 623kt Zn and 60kt Co contained. Most recently, efforts have been focussed on a high grade subset of the main Resource, the Vardy Zone, which has a Resource of 6.6Mt at 1.25% Cu, 0.76% Zn and 1,630ppm Co for 82.6kt Cu, 50.2kt Zn and 10.8kt Co contained. We view this as a potential game-changer for AML, offering the potential for small-scale, high grade, copper-cobalt operation in the near term. Further extension of the Vardy Zone and identification of other high grade portions of the existing Resource are compelling opportunities for AML.

Investment thesis – Buy, (Speculative), valuation \$0.34/sh

AML has entered an exciting period of discovery and growth, during which effective, cost efficient drilling could create significant value through exploration success. The latest results give us the confidence to increase our exploration valuation from \$70m to \$100m – in part based on peer valuations in the market, lifting our valuation to \$0.34/sh from \$0.27/sh. We retain our Buy (Speculative) recommendation.

Valuation – risked discounted cash flow of key project

Our valuation for AML is broadly based on the parameters and assumptions the Vardy Zone PEA, which assumes a Mining Inventory of 3.6Mt @ 1.15% Cu, 1.06% Zn, 26g/t Ag and 1,842ppm (0.18%) Co being mined at a rate of 600ktpa. Over a six year mine-life this is planned to produce a total of 38.2kt copper in concentrate, 28.8kt zinc in concentrate and 3.2kt of cobalt in cobalt hydroxide. In addition to this, our valuation assumes some exploration success, modelling a Mining Inventory of 5.1Mt for a mine life of eight years and higher grades being front-ended in the production profile (as with the PEA).

NPV premium: In the case of AML, we have taken the step of applying a premium of 25% to our base-case valuation which in some circumstances we believe is justified. We believe this is the case for AML, due to a number of factors including:

- The scarcity of cobalt-exposed projects, particularly advanced stage projects, on the ASX;
- The buoyant, positive market outlook for cobalt demand; and
- A premium being paid by the market, over and above the valuations of exploration companies advancing more 'mainstream' commodity projects as a result of these factors.

Our valuation also includes a nominal valuation of \$100m for the balance of the exploration portfolio outside the Vardy Zone. Our valuation also assumes a small equity raise (\$7m at \$0.25/sh), which we view as likely within the next 12 months in order to fund the completion of the Bankable Feasibility Study on the Vardy Zone.

Resource sector risks

Risks to AML include, but are not limited to:

- **Funding and capital management risks.** Funding and capital management risks can include access to debt and equity finance, maintaining covenants on debt finance, managing dividend payments and managing debt repayments. As an exploration company with no sales revenues, AML is reliant on access to equity markets and debt financing to fund the advancement and development of its projects.
- **Operating and development risks.** Mining companies' assets are subject to risks associated with their operation and development. Risks for each company may relate to geological, mining and metallurgical performance vs design. These can be heightened depending on method of operation (e.g. underground versus open pit mining) or whether it is a single mine company. Construction and development of mining assets may be subject to approvals timelines, receipt of permits, weather events, access to skilled labour and technical personnel, as well as key material inputs and mechanical components which may cause delays to construction, commissioning and commercial production.
- **Operating and capital cost fluctuations.** Markets for exploration, development and mining inputs can fluctuate widely and cause significant differences between planned and actual operating and capital costs. Key operating costs are linked to energy and labour costs as well as access to, and availability of, technical skills, operating equipment and consumables.
- **Commodity price and exchange rate fluctuations.** The future earnings and valuations of exploration, development and operating resources companies are subject to fluctuations in underlying commodity prices and foreign currency exchange rates. As most metal prices are denominated in US dollars, their translation into Australian dollars are affected by fluctuations in the value of the Australian dollar. Commodity price and foreign exchange rate outcomes may be different from our forecasts.
- **Resource growth and mine life extensions.** The viability of future operations and earnings forecasts and valuations reliant upon them may depend upon resource and reserve growth to extend mine lives. Exploration success is dependent upon a wide range of factors and can deliver a wide range of results. Even once Reserves have been calculated, their economic viability remains dependent upon actual commodity prices and inputs to operating costs.
- **Regulatory changes risks.** Changes to the regulation of infrastructure and taxation (among other things) can impact the earnings and valuation of mining companies. AML's key assets are located in Australia, in the State of Queensland, a politically and socially stable jurisdiction, however changes to business conditions and government policies can and have occurred, with potential for adverse impacts on the economic and social viability of AML's operations.
- **Corporate/M&A risks.** Risks associated with M&A activity include differences between the entity's and the market's perception of value associated with completed transactions, the actual performance of an acquired asset vs its expected performance as assessed by the acquiror and the timing of an acquisition may all have a material impact on the value attributed by the market to that acquisition.

Table 2 - Financial summary

PROFIT AND LOSS						FINANCIAL RATIOS								
Year ending June	Unit	2016a	2017a	2018e	2019e	2020e	Year ending June	Unit	2016a	2017a	2018e	2019e	2020e	
Revenue	\$m	-	-	-	59.7	120.0	VALUATION							
Expense	\$m	(2.6)	(8.3)	(2.0)	(34.2)	(64.7)	NPAT	\$m	(2)	(8)	(6)	5	27	
EBITDA	\$m	(2.6)	(8.3)	(2.0)	25.5	55.2	Reported EPS	c/sh	(1)	(2)	(2)	1	5	
Depreciation	\$m	-	-	(0.0)	(8.1)	(16.2)	EPS growth	%	na	na	na	na	372%	
EBIT	\$m	(2.6)	(8.3)	(2.0)	17.4	39.0	PER	x	-34.4x	-10.6x	-16.4x	22.9x	4.8x	
Net interest expense	\$m	0.2	0.1	(3.8)	(12.3)	(12.4)	DPS	c/sh	-	-	-	-	-	
PBT	\$m	(2.5)	(8.2)	(5.8)	5.1	26.6	Franking	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Tax expense	\$m	-	-	-	-	-	Yield	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
NPAT	\$m	(2.5)	(8.2)	(5.8)	5.1	26.6	FCF/share	c/sh	(1)	(1)	(10)	(7)	5	
							P/FCFPS	x	-28.1x	-18.3x	-2.6x	-3.5x	5.3x	
							EV/EBITDA	x	-49.2x	-15.5x	-63.9x	5.1x	2.3x	
							EBITDA margin	%	nm	nm	nm	43%	46%	
							EBIT margin	%	nm	nm	nm	29%	33%	
							Return on assets	%	-5%	-14%	-6%	3%	14%	
							Return on equity	%	-8%	-29%	-21%	10%	34%	
							LIQUIDITY & LEVERAGE							
							Net debt (cash)	\$m	17	30	55	60	36	
							ND / E	%	52%	123%	179%	91%	39%	
							ND / (ND + E)	%	34%	55%	64%	48%	28%	
							EBITDA / Interest	x	-	-	-	-2.1x	-4.5x	
							MINERAL RESOURCES							
							Walford Creek, QLD		Mt	% Cu	Cu (kt)	ppm Co	Co (kt)	
							Total resource		73	0.40%	296	813	60	
							Measured		-	-	-	-	-	
							Indicated		16	0.46%	75	914	15	
							Inferred		57	0.39%	221	785	45	
							Vardy Zone							
							Total resource		6.6	1.25%	82.6	1,630	10.8	
							Measured		1.0	1.14%	11.4	1,700	1.7	
							Indicated		2.2	1.26%	27.7	1,800	4.0	
							Inferred		3.4	1.28%	43.5	1,500	5.1	
							PROJECT ASSUMPTIONS - Vardy Zone evaluation							
							Year ending June 30		FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	
							Currency	US\$/A\$	0.73	0.75	0.77	0.75	0.75	
							Copper price	US\$/lb	\$2.22	\$2.44	\$3.06	\$3.16	\$3.26	
							Cobalt	US\$/t	\$35,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	\$55,000	
							Zinc	US\$/t	\$0.80	\$1.20	\$1.23	\$1.26	\$1.29	
							CAPEX - development	A\$m	-	-	(29)	(49)	(19)	
							CAPEX - sustaining	A\$m	-	-	(2)	(2)	(2)	
							Ore milled	Mt	-	-	-	0.30	0.60	
							Head grade	% Cu	-	-	-	1.25%	1.25%	
								ppm Co	-	-	-	1,950	1,950	
							Production	t Cu	-	-	-	3.6	7.1	
								t Co	-	-	-	0.293	0.585	
							VALUATION							
							Ordinary shares (m)						400.4	
							Options in the money (m)						158.0	
							Assumed equity raise (m)						28.0	
							Diluted m						586.4	
							SOTP						\$m	
							Walford Ck (unrisked NPV10)						148	
							Walford Ck (risk discount 25%, NPV10)						111	
							Other exploration						100	
							Corporate overheads						(9)	
							Net cash (debt)						(29)	
							Total (undiluted)						172	
							Cash from options						20	
							Assumed equity raise						7	
							Total (fully diluted)						199	
													0.34	
							MAJOR SHAREHOLDERS							
													%	
													m	
							OCP Holdings						21.5%	86.0
							Regal Funds Management						8.0%	32.1
							Bliss Investments						5.9%	23.5
							Washington H Soul Pattinson						5.6%	22.3
							SLW Minerals Corporation						4.0%	16.0
							Top 5						44.9%	179.8

SOURCE: BELL POTTER SECURITIES ESTIMATES

Recommendation structure

Buy: Expect >15% total return on a 12 month view. For stocks regarded as 'Speculative' a return of >30% is expected.

Hold: Expect total return between -5% and 15% on a 12 month view

Sell: Expect <-5% total return on a 12 month view

Speculative Investments are either start-up enterprises with nil or only prospective operations or recently commenced operations with only forecast cash flows, or companies that have commenced operations or have been in operation for some time but have only forecast cash flows and/or a stressed balance sheet.

Such investments may carry an exceptionally high level of capital risk and volatility of returns.

Research Team

Staff Member	Title/Sector	Phone	@bellpotter.com.au
TS Lim	Head of Research	612 8224 2810	tslim
Industrials			
Sam Haddad	Industrials	612 8224 2819	shaddad
Chris Savage	Industrials	612 8224 2835	csavage
Jonathan Snape	Industrials	613 9235 1601	jsnape
Tim Piper	Industrials	612 8224 2825	tpiper
John Hester	Healthcare	612 8224 2871	jhester
Tanushree Jain	Healthcare/Biotech	612 8224 2849	tnjain
Financials			
TS Lim	Banks/Regionals	612 8224 2810	tslim
Lafitani Sotiriou	Diversified Financials	613 9235 1668	lsotiriou
Resources			
Peter Arden	Resources	613 9235 1833	parden
David Coates	Resources	612 8224 2887	dcoates
Duncan Hughes	Resources	618 9326 7667	dhughes
Associates			
James Filius	Associate Analyst	613 9235 1612	jfilius
Alexander McLean	Associate Analyst	612 8224 2886	amclean

Bell Potter Securities Limited

ACN 25 006 390 7721

Level 38, Aurora Place
88 Phillip Street, Sydney 2000

Telephone +61 2 9255 7200

www.bellpotter.com.au

The following may affect your legal rights. Important Disclaimer:

This document is a private communication to clients and is not intended for public circulation or for the use of any third party, without the prior approval of Bell Potter Securities Limited. In the USA and the UK this research is only for institutional investors. It is not for release, publication or distribution in whole or in part to any persons in the two specified countries. In Hong Kong this research is being distributed by Bell Potter Securities (HK) Limited which is licensed and regulated by the Securities and Futures Commission, Hong Kong. This is general investment advice only and does not constitute personal advice to any person. Because this document has been prepared without consideration of any specific client's financial situation, particular needs and investment objectives ('relevant personal circumstances'), a Bell Potter Securities Limited investment adviser (or the financial services licensee, or the representative of such licensee, who has provided you with this report by arrangement with Bell Potter Securities Limited) should be made aware of your relevant personal circumstances and consulted before any investment decision is made on the basis of this document.

While this document is based on information from sources which are considered reliable, Bell Potter Securities Limited has not verified independently the information contained in the document and Bell Potter Securities Limited and its directors, employees and consultants do not represent, warrant or guarantee, expressly or impliedly, that the information contained in this document is complete or accurate. Nor does Bell Potter Securities Limited accept any responsibility for updating any advice, views opinions, or recommendations contained in this document or for correcting any error or omission which may become apparent after the document has been issued.

Except insofar as liability under any statute cannot be excluded, Bell Potter Securities Limited and its directors, employees and consultants do not accept any liability (whether arising in contract, in tort or negligence or otherwise) for any error or omission in this document or for any resulting loss or damage (whether direct, indirect, consequential or otherwise) suffered by the recipient of this document or any other person.

Disclosure of interest:

Bell Potter Securities Limited, its employees, consultants and its associates within the meaning of Chapter 7 of the Corporations Law may receive commissions, underwriting and management fees from transactions involving securities referred to in this document (which its representatives may directly share) and may from time to time hold interests in the securities referred to in this document.

Disclosure: Bell Potter Securities acted as Manager to the \$5.5m placement in August 2017 and received fees for that service.

ANALYST CERTIFICATION

Each research analyst primarily responsible for the content of this research report, in whole or in part, certifies that with respect to each security or issuer that the analyst covered in this report: (1) all of the views expressed accurately reflect his or her personal views about those securities or issuers and were prepared in an independent manner and (2) no part of his or her compensation was, is, or will be, directly or indirectly, related to the specific recommendations or views expressed by that research analyst in the research report.