

How Gold Fields Improved Hearing Protection and Inclusion with Sensear

Client: Gold Fields – St Ives Gold Mine, Australia
Industry: Mining

Overview

Protecting hearing in noisy mining environments is essential—but providing clear communication at the same time is even harder. At Gold Fields' St Ives Gold Mine, that challenge became personal. Employees faced frustration, isolation, and increased risk due to hearing loss and communication barriers in high-noise zones.



That changed when the site introduced **Sensear's smart hearing protection technology**—combining noise suppression with speech enhancement to keep workers safe, connected, and heard.

The Challenge

Occupational Hygienist Kylie Hooker was tasked with safeguarding worker health, especially from Noise-Induced Hearing Loss (NIHL).

- **High Noise Exposure:** Fixed plants and heavy machinery produce constant background noise that exceeds safe hearing thresholds across multiple work zones.
- **Worker Isolation:** Employees with hearing loss often struggled to communicate, leading to frustration, disengagement, and safety risks in team environments.
- **PPE Limitations:** Traditional hearing protection blocked essential sounds, forcing workers to remove it to hear instructions—compromising safety compliance.
- **Communication Gaps:** Critical instructions were missed or misunderstood, especially in dynamic or mobile environments.
- **Compliance vs. Comfort:** Ensuring consistent use of hearing protection was difficult without devices that workers found both effective and wearable.

As mine sites grew more reliant on clear communication in noisy conditions, the need for hearing protection that also supported speech—and even helped those with hearing loss—became essential for safety and inclusion.



The Solution

Gold Fields adopted Sensear's speech-enhancing hearing protection devices, starting with workers who had difficulty hearing in noisy conditions. With SENS® Technology, users stayed protected while being able to hold conversations without removing their hearing protection—even in environments with heavy machinery and fixed plant noise.

What Made the Difference:

- **Full Situational Awareness** while using Two-way radios or Bluetooth® devices
- **Clear Face-To-Face Conversation** without removing PPE
- **FM Short-Range Communication**—ideal for 1:1 comms within 50 meters
- **Rugged, Over-Ear Design** built for harsh field conditions
- **Future-Ready** planning for IS headset deployment in hazardous zones

The Results

Kylie Hooker shared powerful feedback from the field:

- **Increased Acceptance:** "Sensear increases acceptance of wearing hearing protection and ownership once users see—or hear—the benefits firsthand."
- **Inclusive Solution:** Initially adopted to assist those with hearing loss, the technology proved valuable for all roles in high-noise zones.
- **Reduced Risk:** Workers no longer removed PPE just to communicate.
- **Better Communication:** "Communication is becoming more frequent and easier."
- **Emotional Impact:** "The look on the end user's face when he realises he can hear—that's the highlight for me."

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— **Kylie Hooker,**
*Occupational Hygienist,
Gold Fields – St Ives
Gold Mine*

Looking Ahead

With mining operations demanding clearer communication and stricter safety standards, Sensear's advanced hearing protection solutions are becoming essential gear. From fixed plant areas to high-noise mobile equipment zones, workers now stay connected, protected, and fully engaged.

Conclusion

Whether it's protecting hearing, improving communication, or reducing isolation for those with hearing loss—

Sensear makes it possible.

Sensear delivers the confidence and clarity needed to protect and empower mining

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