

Response ID ANON-URZ4-5FTK-F

Submitted to Fast-track approval applications
Submitted on 2024-05-03 16:41:48

Submitter details

Is this application for section 2a or 2b?

2A

1 Submitter name

Individual or organisation name:
Westland Mineral Sands Co.

2 Contact person

Contact person name:
Heather McKay

3 What is your job title

Job title:
Group General Manager Environment and Sustainability

4 What is your contact email address?

Email:
s 9(2)(a)

5 What is your phone number?

Phone number:
s 9(2)(a)

6 What is your postal address?

Postal address:
s 9(2)(a)

7 Is your address for service different from your postal address?

No

Organisation:

Contact person:

Phone number:

Email address:

Job title:

Please enter your service address:

Section 1: Project location

Site address or location

Add the address or describe the location:

The project's works will occur at Okari Road, Cape Foulwind, Westport, West Coast (see attached plan).

File upload:
Site Plan.pdf was uploaded

Upload file here:

No file uploaded

Do you have a current copy of the relevant Record(s) of Title?

Yes

upload file:

Nine Mile South Combined Certificates of Title.pdf was uploaded

Who are the registered legal land owner(s)?

Please write your answer here:

Luke George Brownlee and Jesse Hunter Brownlee

George Hunter Brownlee and Jennifer Anne Brownlee

WMS Land Co. Ltd

Detail the nature of the applicant's legal interest (if any) in the land on which the project will occur

Please write your answer here:

Where land is not owned by WMS Land Co. Ltd, access is achieved through a legal document granting the applicant access to the land for the duration of the project. The land access agreement details the commercial terms as well as covering the rehabilitation requirements which are covered in the proposed consent conditions.

Section 2: Project details

What is the project name?

Please write your answer here:

Nine Mile South

What is the project summary?

Please write your answer here:

The project will establish a new mining area associated with the current operational and fully consented Nine Mile North mine. This will ensure operations and associated employment of staff will continue for the full 10-year consented term. The project at Nine Mile, including the proposed Nine Mile South extension underpins the investment and re-opening of the Westport Port and initiation of coastal shipping operations by the WMS Group.

What are the project details?

Please write your answer here:

The Nine Mile North mine site is currently consented and operational with all necessary plant and infrastructure. The consent is valid until 2032.

The Nine Mile South Project lies immediately adjacent to the Nine Mile North mine site. WMSC propose to authorise mineral sand mining for garnet, ilmenite and critical minerals/rare earth elements within approximately 53 ha of land covered by Mining Permit 60825 and Exploration Permit 60792 along with associated infrastructure at the Nine Mile South site. This will establish a new mining area, operating in conjunction with the Nine Mile North site to extract the same mineral sands ore. Processing of the Nine Mile South ore will occur in the existing processing plant located at Nine Mile North.

It is noted exploration and resource modelling data, and feasibility studies are held to convert the exploration permit into a mining permit and this is currently under discussion with New Zealand Petroleum and Minerals. The northern section of the Nine Mile South area is already under a mining permit, so on issue of resource consent the Nine Mile South operation can commence without delay.

Nine Mile South will operate under similar management plans and consent conditions as Nine Mile North, staying within the approved life-of-mine period until 2032. It serves as a seamless extension of Nine Mile North operations, with only minimal alterations to existing consent conditions to ensure the new area is appropriately covered.

The Nine Mile South project will ensure that the operations, and employment of staff that it has created, will run for the full 10-year consented term. This expansion underpins the investment and re-opening of Westport port and the initiation of coastal shipping operations using the WMS Group Manahau barge.

The scope of the project is to; -

Establish and operate a new mine expansion area, including auxiliary infrastructure to extract mineral sands and to use existing processing infrastructure at the existing Nine Mile North plant. This entails the extraction of mineral sands ore, feeding the ore to the existing Nine Mile North processing plant

situated on the Nine Mile North site separating heavy mineral concentrate, and reinstating the unmineralized sand back into the mining void.

i) Construct a mine operation that:

- Extracts up to 1mt of sand per year for a physical separation process to remove the valuable heavy minerals.
- Will produce up to 100,000t of mineral products (garnet and ilmenite) per year (tailings will be returned to the pit for site rehabilitation).
- Operates within the currently consented term (of the adjacent Nine Mile North Site) of 10 years to 2032.
- Progressively rehabilitates the land as the mine pit advances as demonstrated in Nine Mile North
- Ensures the continuation of the revenue, GDP benefit and job numbers for the additional mine life
- Provides the essential cargo that justifies the private investment to fully re-open the Westport port. The financially sustainable re-opening of the port contributes to the broader economic ecosystem by enabling the transport of goods via coastal shipping. This symbiotic relationship enhances regional connectivity, fosters economic growth, and creates employment opportunities, ultimately driving sustainable development in the area.

ii) Use existing processing infrastructure on the adjacent Nine Mile North site for separating and blending products.

iii) Use existing trucking routes for transport of product under similar conditions to the current consent.

iv) Establish new infrastructure across the adjacent Nine Mile North site to transport ore and tailings to and from the new site to the processing plant.

NOTE; - The Nine Mile South project will create an additional mining area but use the same processing facilities that already exist on the Nine Mile North site. The processing of product will be carried out at the existing processing plant. The Plant is situated on Nine Mile North which is currently consented for 10 years (until 2032). All product will be fed to the existing processing plant location for processing and returned to the Nine Mile South pits. In essence the Nine Mile South mine will extend the life of the overall Nine Mile mining operations to ensure maximum utilisation for the 10-year term.

The project may involve the following works:

- i) Clearing vegetation and topsoil
- ii) Construction of a river crossing structure for vehicles and infrastructure including any ancillary structures or services
- iii) Carrying out earthworks, including bunds, mine pits, roading and other associated infrastructure
- iv) Discharges associated with mining activities such as water to land (no direct discharge to water is proposed)
- v) Utilise existing water take consent
- vi) Progressive rehabilitation to final landform, landscaping and planting
- vii) Operating a mineral sands mine – within the existing consented hours of operation for Nine Mile North
- viii) Water management, including for any works below the level of the groundwater:
- ix) Works that give rise to vehicle movements:
- x) Works to provide for operation of a mobile plant.
- xi) Use of existing infrastructure and establishment of connecting infrastructure
- xii) Carrying out any other activities that are:-
 - 1) Associated with the activities described in (i) to (xi) above; and,
 - 2) Within the scope of the project as described in the project above

Describe the staging of the project, including the nature and timing of the staging

Please write your answer here:

Month 0 – 3

- Groundworks and Civil infrastructure for river crossing
- Water management infrastructure
- Bunding construction, planting (if required)
- Mobile plant procurement

Month 3 - 4

- Excavation of starter pit

Month 4 – Year 6

- Mining and progressive rehabilitation.
- Progressive mine rehabilitation forming coastal dune to agreed levels, pasture contouring and reseeded.

Year 6 -7

- Final landform rehabilitation and removal of infrastructure (9 months).
- Final Land from to levels and reseeded the grass.

The Project will commence on the northern boundary of the property adjacent the Blind River and proceed south. The mine will progress in one continuous movement. The topsoil will be stripped progressively in front of the mine pit. The rehabilitation will be complete on a progressive basis as the mine pit advances.

- General north-south orientation.

- The ore grade varies across the site from low to high grade. The intent is to blend the high- and low-grade ore and then feed to the processing plant at Nine Mile North.
- The maximum disturbed area will be 12 ha for Nine Mile South.
- Proposed 6-year mining sequence, at full capacity.
- Mine advance rate will be different due to variation in ore thickness and grade. The mine will advance in one continuous sweep,
- Topsoil will be stripped from in front of the mine pit as the excavation progresses south.
- Rehabilitation will occur north of the mine pit as the tails are returned, ground contoured, topsoil spread and grass planting to follow as demonstrated in Nine Mile North.
- Years 1 and 2 advancement rates slower due to thicker ore, ramp up period and grade.
- Land from will be returned to similar land profile upon rehabilitation.

What are the details of the regime under which approval is being sought?

Please write your answer here:

Resource Management Act 1991

- New resource consents will be required for the establishment and operation of the Nine Mile South Site, use of the existing consented water take, use of Nine Mile North site infrastructure, and to provide for additional infrastructure for moving ore and tailings to and from the existing processing plant.
- Land use consent – for the mining activity and infrastructure, earthworks and indigenous vegetation clearance, use of fuel where the site is not sealed, bunded and roofed or covered.
- Land use consent for use of existing Nine Mile North infrastructure for Nine Mile South.
- Land use consent for new infrastructure to transport material to and from existing processing plant.
- Consent to disturb the bed of a river (for installation of crossing structure).
- No new water take consent is required as existing consent is already held and will cover new activities.
- Discharge of water to land
- Discharge of dust to air – permitted activity rules will be met

Wildlife Act 1953

- Wildlife permit for salvaging and re-locating arboreal gecko (if found to be present – note – the studies undertaken have not identified any present on site), potentially protected birds if required (it is not anticipated this will be required). Note a Wildlife Permit is already held for the Nine Mile North site.

Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014

- Archaeological authority to disturb or modify archaeological sites. This is a precautionary authority as it is not intended to disturb or modify an archaeological site. Note an Archaeological Authority is already held for the Nine Mile North site.

If you seeking approval under the Resource Management Act, who are the relevant local authorities?

Please write your answer here:

West Coast Regional Council

Buller District Council

What applications have you already made for approvals on the same or a similar project?

Please write your answer here:

NA – the project application is not yet lodged, as we are waiting the outcome of this process.

Is approval required for the project by someone other than the applicant?

No

Please explain your answer here:

NA

If the approval(s) are granted, when do you anticipate construction activities will begin, and be completed?

Please write your answer here:

Month 0 – Commence Procurement and Detailed Design

Month 3 – Establish and Commence Construction on Site

- This will include fabrication and installation of a prefabricated river crossing structure
- Stripping topsoil
- Set up of the mobile plant

Month 4 – Set up Complete

Month 4 – Plant commissioned and operational.

Mining activity is expected for a duration of 6 - 8 years. The works will be carried out within the existing consented 10-year term for Nine Mile North which runs until 2032.

Section 3: Consultation

Who are the persons affected by the project?

Please write your answer here:

West Coast Regional Council

Buller District Council

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae (Note- a letter of support is attached)

Landowner

Neighbours

Detail all consultation undertaken with the persons referred to above. Include a statement explaining how engagement has informed the project.

Please write your answer here:

Extensive engagement with West Coast Regional Council and Buller District Council, and the local community (including neighbours) has occurred in relation to the associated Nine Mile North Mine which is consented and operational. Variation applications have been granted by the Councils, who have a good understanding of the operations and site. Engagement will continue with the community, as a means for providing information about this project, noting the Nine Mile South site has few direct neighbours.

Engagement with the landowner has occurred and an access is agreed.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae are supportive of this application and their letter of support is attached.

Upload file here:

Nine Mile South NWW letter.pdf was uploaded

Describe any processes already undertaken under the Public Works Act 1981 in relation to the land or any part of the land on which the project will occur:

Please write your answer here:

NA

Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

What treaty settlements apply to the geographical location of the project?

Please write your answer here:

None

Are there any Ngā Rohe Moana o Ngā Hapū o Ngāti Porou Act 2019 principles or provisions that are relevant to the project?

No

If yes, what are they?:

NA

Are there any identified parcels of Māori land within the project area, marae, and identified wāhi tapu?

No

If yes, what are they?:

No. The wider area contains Kāinga and Mahinga kai sites of significance to Māori which were considered as part of the Project design.

Is the project proposed on any land returned under a Treaty settlement or any identified Māori land described in the ineligibility criteria?

No

Has the applicant has secured the relevant landowners' consent?

Yes

Is the project proposed in any customary marine title area, protected customary rights area, or aquaculture settlement area declared under s 12 of the Māori Commercial Aquaculture Claims Settlement Act 2004 or identified within an individual iwi settlement?

No

If yes, what are they?:

NA

Has there been an assessment of any effects of the activity on the exercise of a protected customary right?

No

If yes, please explain:

NA

Upload your assessment if necessary:

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Section 5: Adverse effects

What are the anticipated and known adverse effects of the project on the environment?

Please describe:

As part of the process WMS has engaged various experts to thoroughly understand and address any potential adverse effects associated with the mining and processing operations at Nine Mile. Anticipated and known risks have been carefully analysed, leading to the development of effective mitigation strategies that have been tested as effective for the Nine Mile North. The work of the experts, when considered in conjunction with the actual operation at Nine Mile North approach has led to a detailed understanding, mitigation, and management of the potential adverse effects. Due to the proximity of the Nine Mile South site to existing operations the environmental conditions proposed are similar to currently consented conditions. As part of the original Nine Mile North consent process in collaboration with the West Coast Regional Council, Buller District Council, and WMSC, consent conditions have been established to regulate and minimize any negative impacts. These conditions are further supported by comprehensive management plans tailored by WMSC for the site.

Since the mine commenced production in late 2022, WMSC has consistently operated in compliance with these conditions, with only one instance of water discharge non-compliance, which was quickly rectified, and compliance re-established. The presence of existing consent conditions and management plans underscores WMSC's ability to carry out the mining and processing operations responsibly and sustainably.

A further summary of the effects is listed below:

Waterways including streams, wetlands, and groundwater – ongoing hydrological monitoring will occur in relation to the water table. Water take from Blind River is already consented and new site can operate within existing consent. Discharges to land and water management in general is managed to avoid adverse effects and a water monitoring program will be in place.

Air quality from dust emissions – monitoring and management plan will be in place to avoid adverse dust emissions. Note there are existing dust monitors in place at the existing mine site to continuously monitor dust and it is anticipated that this will be extended to the Nine Mile South site.

Indigenous flora and fauna – up to 10% native vegetation clearance is required across the 62-ha site. Processes will be in place to manage effects on fauna such as an extension of the existing lizard fence and ongoing fauna surveys, as well as effects from vegetation clearance being mitigated, such as planting

Landscape and visual amenity – the existing processing plant will be utilised and there is a proposed maximum disturbance area of 12 ha. Mining is progressive and rehabilitates as it goes, in a similar form to the existing sites and will be no more visual overall than the current site. Planting and bunding may be used to reduce any visual effects. Lighting management plans will be in place.

Noise – the operation will comply with noise standards and monitoring will be in place in line with the existing mine requirements.

Archaeology and Cultural Sites – An archaeological management plan will be in place and appropriate authorities obtained.

Radiation – radiation levels are well below international standards. Ongoing radiation monitoring is in place at the existing Nine Mile Mine and will be extended to the Nine Mile South operation.

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Section 6: National policy statements and national environmental standards

What is the general assessment of the project in relation to any relevant national policy statement (including the New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement) and national environmental standard?

Please write your answer here:

National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management 2020 (NPS-FM) - the proposal is considered to manage water quantity and quality effects in a way that gives effect to Te Mana o Te Wai.

National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity (NPS-IB) - application area has not been identified as an SNA, and no areas meeting the significance criteria in the NPS-IB have been identified.

New Zealand Coastal Policy Statement (NZCPS) – The proposed mine area is outside of the Coastal Marine Area but considered to be part of the Coastal Landscape. Extensive assessment of the area as part of the original Nine Mile application did not assess the area as significant and the proposed activity meets the objectives and policies of the NZCPS.

National Environmental Standards for Freshwater (NES-F) – consent potentially required in relation to wetlands and waterbodies.

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Section 7: Eligibility

Will access to the fast-track process enable the project to be processed in a more timely and cost-efficient way than under normal processes?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Yes, access to the fast-track process will allow the Nine Mile South project to proceed in a more time and cost certain way than under normal processes. This will provide for more operational certainty and ability for business planning and procurement to proceed, effectively ensuring the continuation of the sand mining operations for a further approximately six – eight years (noting this will be within the existing 10-year consent period for the operation of the plant located at the Nine Mile North site).

By utilising the fast-track proposal and obtaining consent in a timely manner WMS can understand and plan to blend the ore from various parts of Nine Mile South and Nine Mile North to optimise the process and achieve a 12% blend. Incorporating the Nine Mile South ore allows for greater certainty in the longevity of the mine life by achieving this blend. It also enables efficient use of an existing consented plant with no need for an additional resource consent process.

Utilizing the fast-track process provides crucial time and cost certainty for the business. The Nine Mile deposits comprise high, medium, and low-grade ore spread across the site. Our processing plant is optimized for a blend of these ores, ideally reaching a 12% heavy mineral concentration.

If the grade is too high the plant can 'clog up' and stop working or if it is too low the end product is of limited value. Either of these can reduce the feasibility of the mine site and potentially result in job losses or extended down time. Either has an economic impact on the staff currently employed by the company.

Obtaining consent promptly allows us to plan the optimal sequence and blend ores from Nine Mile South and Nine Mile North effectively to achieve the 12% blend. This ensures optimal processing and extending the mine's longevity.

Procurement of critical items can be undertaken at an earlier stage minimising the potential downtime between transitions.

What is the impact referring this project will have on the efficient operation of the fast-track process?

Please write your answer here:

The effects of a mineral sands operation at Nine Mile South are well understood, due to the existing adjacent operating mine site, with the Nine Mile South project essentially a continuation of this. Baseline assessment has occurred and is ongoing. The understanding of the area and impact of mineral sand mining and the working of existing resource consent conditions mean that the Nine Mile South project is well placed to meet the objective of

efficient operation of the fast-track process.

Has the project been identified as a priority project in a:

Local government plan or strategy

Please explain your answer here:

Minerals and Petroleum Resource Strategy for Aotearoa New Zealand 2019 – 2029 (Resource Strategy) - The proposed Nine Mile South site will extract critical minerals consistent with the Resource Strategy. The Minerals Strategy specifically identifies West Coast as an important part of New Zealand's clean-tech mineral potential. The minerals extracted in heavy mineral concentrate, and the mining method, contribute to the resource strategy vision around a world-leading environmental and socially responsible minerals sector.

‘Te Whanaketanga Tai Poutini West Coast Economic Strategy 2050 (Te Whanaketanga) – This is a document prepared by stakeholders to the West Coast (including local authorities and iwi), and states : “Te Tai Poutini has an abundance of natural resources that form the backbone of our regional economy. To secure our long term economic prosperity and resilience, we need to actively support the growth of emerging industries and strengthen our economic drivers by focusing on adding value. By focusing on a more circular economic approach, we are able to increase the value of our products and deliver better outcomes for the environment. Our economic activity must actively protect and give back to the natural environment that supports our prosperity. Te Tai Poutini has untapped potential in the green economy space – from the unrealised value of our natural resources to the knowledge economy potential that exists from our strengths in conservation and biodiversity restoration.” In addition, the strategy seeks “Enabled and connected resilient and sustainable fit for purpose infrastructure network (transport, energy and digital) that supports increased productivity, strengthens our resilience, and provides growth opportunities”. The competitive advantage of the emerging mineral sand sector and its role in supporting a regenerative economic future is recognised in Te Whanaketanga.

Te Whanaketanga also identifies a key economic wero (challenge) as being diversification. The West Coasts competitive advantage in mining and natural resources is specifically highlighted as a priority. The mineral sands mine and the diversification away from traditional mines aligns with this.

West Coast Regional Land Transport Plan (RLTP) 2024 -2034- The RLTP recognises the importance of mineral sands to the retention and revitalisation of the future of the West Coast ports.

Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

Regional significant infrastructure

Please explain your answer here:

The Project will ensure the product necessary to economically underwrite the redevelopment and longevity of the Westport Port.

The Nine Mile South project will be a key link in the wider WMS Group business strategy which includes the revitalisation of the Westport and Greymouth Ports. Heavy Mineral Sands from the Nine Mile South mine will be transported from the Westport port via the WMS Group owned coastal shipping vessel soon to arrive in New Zealand. As well as mineral sands transportation this vessel will be utilised around the New Zealand coastline for the shipment of aggregates, hard rock, and other bulk products, particularly for North Island infrastructure projects. The ongoing use of the ports, and the existence of a coastal shipping vessel will provide a key contribution to both regional and national shipping infrastructure and transport options as well as much needed economic and disaster resilience.

Will the project:

Please explain your answer here:

NA

Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Mining has always been, and will continue to be, a vital part of the West Coast economy, reflecting the region's nature resource endowments and hence comparative advantages. Mining is over nine times as important to the West Coast economy as it is to the national economy. In October 2023 John Ballingall of Sense Partners (Statement of Evidence of John Stacey Ballingall, Strategic Directions Hearings, Te Tai o Poutini Plan) identified Mineral Sands mining in particular as 17 times more important to the West Coast economy than nationally.

Mr Ballingall confirmed mining in general directly accounts for 7.7% of the region's GDP and supports a wide range of other industries throughout its supply chain.

Mining also generates around \$50.6 million dollars of wages for over 600 West Coast workers, with median wages being over 50% than the average wage for all industries.

According to an independent economic report by BERL in 2019 (Sanderson, K., 2019, Impacts on the West Coast of mineral Sand export industry options) minerals mining, processing, and exporting will create up to 180 FTE direct and indirect jobs and annual expenditure in the region of \$60 - \$70 million dollars. Under these assumptions, the resource would last for more than fifty years.

The wider potential WMSC operations will bring significant social benefits to the West Coast community. The project already provides significant benefit to the Westport community as a result of the operations at Nine Mile. These are currently visible in the community. The addition of the Nine Mile South project will ensure the 40+ company employees will continue to be employed for the maximum possible timeframe.

As stated above the extension at Nine Mile underwrites the investment required for Westport port and the WMS Group Coastal shipping. The West Coast is a potentially abundant source of high-quality aggregate in the form of river gravel and revetment rock. The region's unique geography means that the replenishment rate of river deposits, at 1,800 t/km²/year, is far higher than the world average (182 t/km²/year).

This is an example of a much-needed resource in which the West Coast has a competitive advantage. Aggregate is essential for use in road construction and in concrete for buildings. National challenges, such as creating affordable housing and closing the infrastructure deficit, depend on a reliable and economical supply of aggregate.

Much of this supply is easily extracted. However, the main barrier is transporting the aggregate to where it is needed. Demand is highest in our largest cities, and where road building activity is most intense. The proposed extension of the Nine Mile South project further underwrites the establishment of a barge operation to ship the extracted mineral sands offshore. The extraction and other operations will not use all the barge capacity.

WMS Group intend to on-sell this excess capacity to other producers in the region, including for aggregate transport. This provides a national benefit to the country. The West Coast region can deliver economically feasible quality aggregate and rock to other places that have a shortfall, including roading and civil infrastructure projects delivered for the government.

The continuation of the mine life will ensure the current economic benefits that are visible in the area as a result of the mine site extending.

Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

No

Please explain your answer here:

NA

Will the project support development of natural resources, including minerals and petroleum?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Yes, the project focuses on the mining of heavy mineral concentrate, including critical minerals. The project will contribute to WMS Group's wider critical mineral mining on the West Coast. This is leading the way in the diversification of the mining industry on the West Coast and in New Zealand.

Westland Mineral Sands holds significant reserves of industrial minerals such as Ilmenite and Garnet, as well as the vital Rare Earth Elements (REE, rare earths) critical for a sustainable future. We are working with international partners to bring these minerals to the global market.

Will the project support climate change mitigation, including the reduction or removal of greenhouse gas emissions?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

This project supports diversification of the mining sector on the West Coast.

WMS have converted the processing plant at Nine Mile North to run on electricity sourced from New Zealand's 87 percent renewable energy network, saving 500,000 litres of diesel annually. WMS are exploring alternatives to diesel-fuelled trucks to move our product from site to port. All our production and logistics operations are planned with careful consideration for our neighbours.

The WMS Group motorised barge will deliver the mineral sands product from local ports direct to sea-going bulk carriers, reducing the reliance on road transport to get product to international customers. Our experts tell us a tonne of cargo moved by our barge will create only 33 percent of the emissions of moving the same volume by road.

Will the project support adaptation, resilience, and recovery from natural hazards?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The Project does not directly affect the above elements. However, the project supports and underwrites the Westport Port. The opening of the port provides the following: -

Infrastructure Resilience: With limited road access to the region, the port and barge combination offer a vital alternative for transportation by sea, bolstering the area's infrastructure resilience.

Emergency Response Preparedness: The port's availability provides an additional avenue for emergency supplies, enhancing the region's preparedness. Pre-event contingency planning and drills can be conducted to iron out any logistical challenges ahead of time.

Will the project address significant environmental issues?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project supports diversification of the mining sector to support the transition to a low emissions future. The mineral sands produced from this project will make a meaningful contribution to critical and green mineral supply supporting future technologies.

The overall long-term sustainability of the venture is heavily dependent on the quality of the post-mining landscape of the sites. Much of the mineral sand is under productive farmland, and we have a responsibility to the landowners, the local authorities, and the West Coast community to ensure it is returned to a similar or better state.

WMSC have worked with environmental experts to ensure there is a realistic plan to restore the land to a level suitable for its intended use. The mineral sands are relatively close to the surface and approximately 80% of what is removed is returned to the ground and rehabilitated for future use. The resulting landforms will be similar in nature to what exists currently, with pasture established in similar or better state than what currently exists including agricultural grazing and native bush.

Is the project consistent with local or regional planning documents, including spatial strategies?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

West Coast Regional Land and Water Plan (RLWP) - the objectives and policies relating to land management, surface water quality and quantity and groundwater seek to avoid, remedy, or mitigate adverse effects on the life supporting capacity of ecosystems, natural character and values of freshwater bodies, protection of existing water uses. The activity is assessed as in accordance with the RLWP.

West Coast Regional Air Quality Plan –the permitted activity rules in this plan will be met.

Buller District Plan - has relevant policies, objectives and rules relating to rural land and water resources, mineral resources, cultural and historic resources, the coastal environment and ecosystems and natural habitats. The proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives and policies of the District Plan.

Te Tai o Poutini Plan (Proposed Plan) –the Proposed Plan is still going through the hearings process and as such limited weighting should be applied to the objectives and policies in this document. It is noted that the sections of the plan relating to Sights and Areas of Significance to Māori (SASM) are already operative. There is one SASM (SASM19) relevant to the site. Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae have recently provided written approval for the existing Nine Mile site, and it is anticipated this will be able to be extended across the Nine Mile South site. Note Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Waewae have provided a letter of support for this project being accepted for the fast-track process. (Note- a letter of support is attached)

Anything else?

Please write your answer here:

NA

Does the project includes an activity which would make it ineligible?

No

If yes, please explain:

Section 8: Climate change and natural hazards

Will the project be affected by climate change and natural hazards?

Yes

If yes, please explain:

Yes. Project could be intermittently affected by heavy rain events; however, water management systems are designed. As assessment of the risk of damage from earthquakes is considered by geotechnical engineer to be low. Should associated transport networks be affected, production can be suspended as needed.

Section 9: Track record

Please add a summary of all compliance and/or enforcement actions taken against the applicant by any entity with enforcement powers under the Acts referred to in the Bill, and the outcome of those actions.

Please write your answer here:

Nine Mile (existing mine operation) non-compliance in April 2023 due to turbid water discharge to a farm drain. The issue was rectified within 10-days of the abatement notice and no further issues experienced. The abatement notice is in council process to be removed.

Load your file here:

No file uploaded

Declaration

Do you acknowledge your submission will be published on environment.govt.nz if required

Yes

By typing your name in the field below you are electronically signing this application form and certifying the information given in this application is true and correct.

Please write your name here:

Heather McKay

Important notes