

Response ID ANON-URZ4-5F87-Y

Submitted to Fast-track approval applications
Submitted on 2024-05-03 13:41:23

Submitter details

Is this application for section 2a or 2b?

2A

1 Submitter name

Individual or organisation name:
Waikaka Gold Mines Limited

2 Contact person

Contact person name:
Anita Collie

3 What is your job title

Job title:
Principal Planner

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:

Town Planning Group
Level 1
100 Victoria Street
Christchurch Central
Christchurch 8013

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:

Near 972 Waikaka Road, Chatton North, Southland. Maps uploaded below. In the second image, the mining permit boundary is shown in the pink outline and the mine path is indicated by the yellow shading.

File upload:

Site Location.png was uploaded

Upload file here:

Site Location Plan.png was uploaded

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

Yes

upload file:

Waikaka RoT..pdf was uploaded

Who are the registered legal land owner(s)?

Please write your answer here:

J. Gardyne Limited,
Gardyne Agriculture Limited,
Pullar Siding Farm Limited,
Andrew Robert Weir, Pauline Margaret Weir and Barry Leslie Roughan,
Greg Jeffrey Lamb,
Gore District Council,
The Crown.

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:

The Applicant has in place formal access arrangements with the private landowners whose land is subject of this proposal. Discussions with the Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand are underway in respect of access arrangements to the Crown Land within the project area comprising the bed and margins of the Waikaka Stream. The Applicant will apply for a mining permit imminently in accordance with the Crown Minerals Act 1991.

Section 2: Project details

What is the project name?

Please write your answer here:

Waikaka Gold Mine

What is the project summary?

Please write your answer here:

The Applicant proposes to establish an alluvial gold mine on the site with on-site processing. Approximately \$170 million of gold will be mined over 8 years whilst employing up to 30 people. The proposal will have significant regional benefits.

What are the project details?

Please write your answer here:

The purpose of the project is to operate an open-cut gold mine over 8 years on a 95ha site, producing on average 6,000 ounces of gold per year. The Applicant aims to balance the economic benefits of gold mining with a commitment to good environmental practice.

The Applicant has undertaken extensive exploration, feasibility studies and commissioned relevant technical investigations over a number of years in order to determine the commercial and environmental appropriateness of the project. Extensive pre-application consultation has been undertaken with landowners, neighbours, the two consent authorities, government and iwi organisations, and the local community.

The project has been informed by detailed reports prepared by a range of experts, providing assessment of the potential impacts of the proposal on the environment and people, and also practical mitigation measures. These include:

- Mine Methodology Report – Waikaka Gold Ltd;
- Planning and Resource Management Assessment – Town Planning Group
- Geotechnical Assessment – Tonkin & Taylor;
- Hydrogeology Report – Environmental Associates Limited;
- Aquatic Ecology and Surface Water Quality Assessment – Ross Dungey Consulting;
- Preliminary Site Investigation – R.J Hall & Associated Limited;
- Noise Assessment Report – Hegley Acoustic Consultants;
- Acid Mine Drainage Assessment Report – Mine Waste Management Limited;

- Archaeological Reports – J. Hamel and Southern Archaeology Limited; and
- Landscape Assessment Report – Vivian Espie Landscape Architects.

The Applicant proposes to:

- Mine gold bearing wash at depths of 20m to 40m below ground on an 95ha site over 8 years. The operation involves dewatering the mine pit for a dry, open-cut mine and overburden will be stripped and progressively replaced in the mine void, creating a moving mine-cell up to a maximum area of 5ha, requiring movement of around 20.7 million bcm of material. Ancillary activities will take place on an additional 10ha of land, making the total site area 95ha.
- Process 300,000 bcm annually into a conventional land-based Gold Recovery Plant. The operation is supported by on-site workshops, storage, office, staff amenities and other ancillary activities, all part of the Site Infrastructure Area.
- Stockpile approximately 446,000 bcm of overburden up to a maximum height of 10m above existing ground level on the site. A dedicated stockpile area will be created, and other smaller stockpiles may be created on a temporary basis on top of backfill or marginal to the mined area.
- Temporarily divert four sections of the Waikaka Stream and Shepherd's Creek, with each diversion lasting approximately 12 months. The streams will be returned to their current alignment and the Applicant will undertake enhancements of the rehabilitated stream channels, including riparian plantings, a higher proportion of native species and cobble substrate with minimal sediment cover.
- Discharge treated water via the treatment facilities within the site infrastructure area, from the gold processing and dewatering operations to the Waikaka Stream.
- Undertake full rehabilitation of the site and return it to a similar or improved state.

The proposed mining operation is a temporary activity. The land rehabilitation programme which progressively follows the mining operation will leave the site retaining little long-term evidence of mining activity and will be returned to a productive agricultural use.

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

Please write your answer here:

A mine life of 8 years is anticipated based on the predicted gold processing capacity.

The mining operation is divided into quarterly production blocks in the work plan, although work in one block will blend seamlessly into the next. Mining starts at the starter pit and moves sequentially through each block. Backfilling and progressive rehabilitation will follow the mine face advances along the mine path from the starter pit, after the wash extraction is completed.

Construction of the temporary watercourse diversions is scheduled progressively from year 3 to year 7 of operations with reinstatement to the current watercourse alignment following completion of mining and backfilling of the mine void through each diverted section. At the end of the mine life the land disturbed by mining will be fully rehabilitated during a three-year restoration period and returned to farm productivity levels as good as or better than those pre-mining.

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

Please write your answer here:

Resource Consents under the Resource Management Act 1991. Resource consents are required for:

- Land use consent (s9) for the construction and use of a bore (the mine pit is defined as a bore)
- Land use consent (s9) for mining activity and various District Plan Standards
- Land use consent (s9) for soil disturbance under the NESCS
- Land use consent (s13) for works in a watercourse associated with stream diversions
- Water permit for take, use, damming and diversion associated with stream diversions, and taking and use of water for dewatering, gold processing, dust suppression and site rehabilitation
- Discharge Permit for placement of cleanfill into the mine pit, and discharge of treated water to the Waikaka Stream, and discharge of stream flow associated with stream diversions
- Discharge to air of dust associated with processing and stockpiling

Crown Minerals Act 1991

Land access arrangement under section 61 or 61B to Crown land within the project area.

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

Please write your answer here:

Environment Southland and Gore District Council.

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

Please write your answer here:

No applications have been submitted.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The Applicant has in place formal access arrangements with the private landowners whose land is subject of this proposal. Discussions with the Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand are underway in respect of access arrangements to the Crown Land comprising the bed and margins of the Waikaka Stream. The Applicant will apply for a mining permit in accordance with the Crown Minerals Act 1991.

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

Please write your answer here:

Once approvals are granted, the operation can begin within 6 months.

The Directors and shareholders of the Applicant have a proven track record of funding similar projects, the most recent being by its sister company Waikaia Gold Limited (80,000 oz gold produced between 2013 and 2019). The Applicant will be able to commence site establishment works quickly as detailed design has already been completed.

The Applicant has identified necessary plant and equipment. Procurement and mobilisation would commence on grant of approvals. Staff recruitment is expected to resolve quickly as the Applicant has people based locally and understand there is locally skilled people who can be recruited to the project.

Full completion of mining will be achieved around 8 years after works commence. Full site rehabilitation will be completed within 3 years once mining is completed.

Section 3: Consultation

Who are the persons affected by the project?

Please write your answer here:

Environment Southland
Gore District Council
Landowners within the mine footprint
Landowners within approximately 1km of the proposed mine footprint
Hokonui Rūnanga
Fish and Game
Department of Conservation
Land Information New Zealand

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:

Consultation with all the above parties was been undertaken in 2022 and the outcomes were:

Environment Southland - Advised the Applicant that the project requires careful management of water quality and ecological impacts, suggesting enhancements to the Waikaka Stream diversion and monitoring systems, while considering the broader environmental and cultural implications of the project. The Applicant has incorporated their advice into the project with proposed habitat and ecological value improvements to the Waikaka Stream and full rehabilitation post completion of the project. Additional consultation has begun as of 24 April 2024 with an updated project description, this is ongoing.

Gore District Council - Advised on matters that need to be addressed in any application, all matters have been or will be addressed with expert technical reports to support. Additional consultation has begun as of 24 April 2024 with an updated project description, this is ongoing.

Landowners - The Applicant has consulted with all private landowners within the application site area and has access agreements confirmed with these parties. Multiple discussions have been held with surrounding landowners within 1km of the site. Additional consultation has been ongoing, with telephone conversations between the Applicant and landowners during the week 29 April to 02 May 2024, in addition to updated project descriptions being provided.

Hokonui Rūnanga - Key issues will be stream depletion and ecological and hydrological effects with Hokonui Rūnanga wanting to be involved with any remediation plans. Concerns were identified with the initial project design and in response to that feedback, the Applicant has redesigned several aspects of the project. In particular the diversion of the Waikaka Stream and Shepherds Creek have been redesigned to reduce impacts on these water bodies. The Applicant has sought to implement advice from Hokonui Rūnanga and has been advised that a Cultural Impact Assessment will be provided during the processing of the application. Planting of the riparian margin of the rehabilitated stream channel will occur on the advice of suitably qualified freshwater ecologist and with consideration for cultural matters through discussion with Hokonui Rūnanga. Additional consultation has begun as of 24 April 2024 with an updated project description, this is ongoing.

Fish and Game - Provided advice on fishery values, public access and environmental enhancement. Additional consultation has begun as of 24 April 2024 with an updated project description, this is ongoing.

Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand - Discussions with the Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand are underway in respect of access arrangements to the Crown Land comprising the bed and margins of the Waikaka Stream.

Upload file here:

No file 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:

Not applicable.

Section 4: Iwi authorities and Treaty settlements

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

Please write your answer here:

The Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act of 1998 is relevant to the subject site, it recognises the rangatiratanga of Ngāi Tahu and includes specific provisions related to the exercise of rangatiratanga and kaitiakitanga of mana whenua in resource management matters. The Applicant is actively engaging with Hokonui Rūnanga, the Ngāi Tahu Papataipu Rūnanga with mana whenua authority over the project site.

Although the Waikaka Stream is a tributary of the Maitai River, it is not included in the Statutory Acknowledgement Area under the Ngai Tahu Claims Settlement Act 1998.

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?:

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

No

If yes, what are they?:

There are no identified parcels of Māori land or marae within the project area.

There are no identified wāhi tapu in the District Plan nor the relevant Iwi Management Plan (Te Tangi a Tauria), and no wāhi tapu have been identified by Hokonui Rūnanga.

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?:

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

Yes

If yes, please explain:

There are no protected customary rights relevant to the proposal.

Upload your assessment if necessary:

No file uploaded

Section 5: Adverse effects

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

Please describe:

Refer to the attached document for summaries of effects assessment. The following effects are considered relevant:

- Geotechnical effects
- Acid Mine Drainage
- Groundwater Quantity Effects
- Groundwater Quality Effects
- Surface Water Quantity Effects
- Surface Water Quality Effects
- Ecological effects
- Effects on Erosion and Bed and Bank Atability
- Flooding Effects
- Effects of Dust on Air Quality and Amenity
- Flooding Effects
- Effects on Recreation and Public Access
- Effects of Signage
- Transport Effects
- Effects of Hazardous Substance Storage and Use
- Archaeological and Heritage Effects
- Effects on Local Amenity Values
- Effects on Land Resource and Soil Productivity
- Effects Relating to Potentially Contaminated Land
- Effects on Social and Economic Wellbeing
- Effects Relating to Climate Change
- Effects on Cultural Values
- Positive Effects

Upload file:

Waikaka - Effects Assessment.pdf was uploaded

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:

The National Policy Statement on Freshwater Management (NPS-FM), National Policy Statement for Highly Productive Land 2022 (NPS-HPL) and National Policy Statement for Indigenous Biodiversity 2022 (NPS-IB) are relevant.

National Environmental Standard for Freshwater (NES-F) and National Environmental Standard for Assessing and Managing Contaminants in Soil to Protect Human Health (NES-CS) are relevant.

An assessment of these is provided in the attached document.

For clarity, no other national policy statement and national environmental standards are relevant.

File upload:

Waikaka - NPS and NES Assessment.pdf was uploaded

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:

If the project is submitted through a streamlined regime, involving expert panels and joint Minister assessments, it will accelerate the necessary approvals such that the positive economic gains can be realised quickly. Similar projects taken multiple years to get to a decision stage and may also be appealed to the Courts adding even more significant delays.

The financial cost (in terms of delays, holding costs and consenting) are significant and will be detrimental to the project following a conventional planning process. The fast-track process is critical to ensuring an efficient outcome that can lead to the benefits of the proposal being realised as quickly as possible.

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

Please write your answer here:

The project application is nearing completion with a full application ready by the time the expert panels are anticipated to be set up. It will not negatively impact the efficient operation of the fast-track process.

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

Other

Please explain your answer here:

The project has not been identified as a priority project.

Will the project deliver regionally or nationally significant infrastructure?

Not Answered

Please explain your answer here:

The project does not relate to infrastructure.

Will the project:

Please explain your answer here:

The project does not relate to housing.

Will the project deliver significant economic benefits?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The proposed mine will generate foreign exchange earnings of US\$100M (NZ\$170M) from gold sales at current gold prices (NZ\$3,800 per ounce) over the 8-year mine life. Operating costs over the life of mine total NZ\$105M including substantial royalties paid to landowners and the Crown. The mine will employ up to 30 people full-time with an annual wages bill of NZ\$3.6M, with most of the workforce being local. The bulk of the operating expenditure is local, pumping NZ\$10-14M per year into the local and regional economy.

Will the project support primary industries, including aquaculture?

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project is mining, which is considered a primary industry. However, the Applicant acknowledges the Bill directly provides for mining in a separate clause.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project is for the mining of gold which supports the development of natural resources.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Climate change mitigation is not relevant to this project. While this application is for a mining activity, it is not in relation to a combustible or greenhouse gas generating material (such as coal). The activity will involve vehicles and machinery, however no more so than other industrial and commercial activities that can occur as of right. The Applicant proposes to electrify operations wherever possible.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

Natural hazard have limited relevance to this project, except in relation to the design of temporary diversion channels in respect to flood carrying capacity.

Will the project address significant environmental issues?

No

Please explain your answer here:

Gold is a natural resource with high value. While leaving it in-situ would have no environment effect, it is a resource that has benefits with its extraction, as set out above.

The primary goal of the project is not to address significant environmental issues however, the project will provide for a net improvement of biodiversity values whilst adverse effects of the project will be avoided, remedied or mitigated.

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

Yes

Please explain your answer here:

The project is consistent with the relevant local and regional provisions as follows:

Southland Regional Policy Statement: The proposal's impact on water quality in the Waikaka Stream and Shepherd's Creek is mitigated by measures that maintain water quality standards with any adverse effects being temporary and mitigated. Water resource management is sustainable, maintaining instream values without over-allocation. Public access to waterways is temporarily restricted for safety and to allow ecological rehabilitation to establish.

Overall, the project supports the sustainable use of land resources, balancing mineral extraction with the social, economic, and cultural well-being of the community and is consistent with the relevant provisions.

Southland Regional Water Plan: The proposal demonstrates alignment with the Southland Regional Water Plan by ensuring water quality is maintained and effects are appropriately mitigated. The sustainable abstraction of groundwater and positive impact on surface water flows are consistent with the plan's principles. The proposal aims to enhance aquatic habitats and ecosystems, reinforcing its commitment to sustainable resource management. Overall, the project is consistent with the relevant provisions of the Southland Regional Water Plan.

Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan: Many of the key Objectives and Policies in the plan cover matters that have been addressed in the Southland Regional Policy Statement and Southland Regional Water Plan in the preceding sections. Overall, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the Objectives and Policies of the Proposed Southland Water and Land Plan.

Southland Regional Air Plan: A dust management plan will be detailed prior to the commencement of work to ensure that dust emissions will be actively managed and minimised to maintain good local ambient air quality. Overall, the project is consistent with the Southland Regional Air Plan.

Southland Regional Effluent Land Application Plan: Gold processing on site is an industrial or trade process, though mineral extraction is not. The process return water meets the definition of 'effluent' in this plan, and hence the Objectives and Policies are considered in relation to process return water only. Noting that the content of the process return water is the natural material (i.e., clays, silts, etc.) mixed with dewatering water, the discharge of the process return water into the settlement ponds will not result in less than minor to nil adverse effects on the values identified in the relevant Objectives and supporting Policies. Overall, the project is consistent with the Southland Regional Effluent Land Application Plan.

Gore District Plan: The temporary adverse effects from mining activities are mitigated by comprehensive rehabilitation plans that provide for the restoration and some enhancement of the natural character of the site. The project's approach to earthworks and land disturbance aligns with the rural environment's ongoing practices and is aligned with anticipated outcomes for the zone. Mitigation measures, such as progressive rehabilitation and operating restrictions, ensure the maintenance of local amenity and environmental quality. Considering the proposal in its entirety, including the rehabilitation and restoration efforts, it achieves consistency with the relevant objectives and policies.

Proposed Gore District Plan: It is considered that more weight should be afforded to the operative district plan objectives and policies, as there are submissions against most relevant provisions and given the early stage of the plan making process. Nonetheless, the proposal is considered consistent with the relevant provisions of this plan.

Te Tangi a Tauria - Ngāi Tahu ki Murihiku Natural Resource and Environmental Iwi Management Plan 2008: This plan emphasises the protection of archaeological sites and wāhi tapu. The project seeks to avoid mining in culturally significant areas, enhance cultural values through restoration and beautification efforts, and ensure environmental safeguards. Measures include treating discharges to meet water quality standards and maintaining fish passage. While the plan prefers land discharge, practical considerations necessitate water discharge, with the project open to protocols for accidental discoveries.

The proposal also aims to establish a new riparian zone with native planting, to improve water quality and stabilise the area. Whilst the proposal is consistent with Te Tangi a Tauria, the Applicant continues to consult with tangata whenua and is seeking a cultural values assessment which will provide additional assessment against Te Tangi a Tauria and provide further assurances of the projects consistency.

Anything else?

Please write your answer here:

The proposed mining operation is a temporary activity and the progressive rehabilitation programme will leave the site retaining little long-term evidence of mining activity and the land will be returned to a productive agricultural use.

The proposal meets the eligibility criteria by being a mining operation, and providing for regionally significant economic benefits. The project has been informed by detailed reports prepared by a range of experts, providing assessment of the potential impacts of the proposal on the environment and people, and also practical mitigation measures. The adverse effects of the proposal are able to be appropriately managed and is completely appropriate to be considered for the Schedule 2A fast track process.

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

No

If yes, please explain:

The project does not include any aspect that is included on the ineligible project list.

Section 8: Climate change and natural hazards

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

No

If yes, please explain:

Natural hazards have limited relevance to this project however flood carrying capacity of water bodies may be improved upon as a result of this project. The project will not be affected by climate change and natural hazards.

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:

To the best of the directors' recollection and understanding, work programs and conditions have been complied with and permits maintained in good standing on all projects.

In particular, the Applicant's project team has operated a gold mine at Waikaia between 2013 – 2019 with a very good compliance history and record of rehabilitation at that site. At the time of preparing this application, the Waikaia mine site has now been completely rehabilitated.

The Applicant's project team comprises people with the skills and experience to ensure the project proceeds as assessed and rehabilitation is undertaken as proposed.

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:

Anita Collie

Important notes