

**Before the Expert Panel appointed
under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024**

Under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024
(Act)

And

In the Matter of an application for approvals by
Matakanui Gold Limited to establish,
operate, rehabilitate and ultimately
close an open pit and underground
gold mining operation known as the
Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project

**Statement of Evidence of
Dr Naomi Jane Woods on behalf of
Matakanui Gold Limited in response to
Section 53 Feedback**

Heritage

Dated: 17 April 2026

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INTRODUCTION

1. My name is Dr Naomi Jane Woods.
2. My experience as a professional archaeologist includes almost 15 years of consultancy work, including leading a team of varying backgrounds and experience levels for the past nine years as part of my role as Principal Archaeologist/Team Leader/Material Culture Specialist at New Zealand Heritage Properties Ltd (**NZHP**). I have extensive experience undertaking archaeological and heritage impact assessments, including on large and complex projects.
3. I have over five years of teaching and academic experience in nineteenth century New Zealand archaeology, archaeological practice, methods and theory, and hold a PhD in Archaeology from the University of Otago. My research background has a focus on telling meaningful stories from data gathered during cultural resource management work, as well as developing best practice methods for qualitative analysis of archaeological data, artefact analysis and interpretation. I have published multiple papers in international peer reviewed journals and co-authored a book on nineteenth century New Zealand archaeology.
4. I have extensive experience recording archaeological sites across Otago, including those relating to goldmining (Gabriels Gully, St Bathans, Vinegar Hill, Fraser River valley, Skippers), including multiple seasons of teaching excavations for Honours (400) level University of Otago students.
5. I have been leading a team in recording and understanding the heritage landscape of the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project since 2017.
6. My full CV for Section 45 approval under the HNZPTA 2014 is included in the Substantive Application (Document K.07).
7. This statement is given as part of Matakanui Gold Limited's (**MGL**) response to comments on the Bendigo-Ophir Gold Project (**BOGP**) made under Section 53 of the FTA. This statement responds to specific comments raised by:
 - (a) Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga (**HNZPT**);
 - (b) Department of Conservation (**DOC**);
 - (c) New Zealand Conservation Authority (**NZCVA**);
 - (d) Central Otago District Council (**CODC**);
 - (e) Sustainable Tarras;

- (f) Otago Conservation Board;
 - (g) Environmental Defence Society Incorporated; and
 - (h) Royal Forest and Bird.
8. My original findings are provided in full in the following reports:
- (a) B.34A and B.34B - New Zealand Heritage Properties Limited - Heritage Assessment (NZHP 2025a) (10 March 2026).
 - (b) G.22 Archaeological and Heritage Management Plan (Woods, 2025).
 - (c) B.38 New Zealand Heritage Properties Limited - Come in Time Track Memorandum (Woods 2025).
9. I have prepared this statement in the limited time available for MGL to respond to comments under the Act. If the Panel requires elaboration on any of the matters raised in this statement, I am available to provide further information on request.
10. Although this is not an Environment Court proceeding my confirmation of compliance with the Code of Conduct for Expert Witnesses in the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 is included in Substantive Application Document A0.2B.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS FROM REGULATORS REGARDING METHODOLOGY

Individual vs Landscape-wide Assessment

11. HNZPT, DOC and the NZCVA argue in their relevant s51 reports and/or s53 comments that the Heritage Assessment should have considered the sites as interconnected site complexes. This is how the updated report (B.34B provided to the expert panel on 10 March 2026) is structured, with sites grouped into the site complexes as described in the HNZPT Internal Assessment (shown in Appendix 1). This approach was discussed and agreed upon during discussions between NZHP, the HNZPT Otago/Southland Regional Archaeologist and the HNZPT Manager Archaeology on 19 February 2026. It is noted that the NZCVA's s53 report draws directly from DOC's s51 report that incorrectly states sites were not considered together.
12. Assessments of individual sites as recorded on the New Zealand Archaeological Association's digital site recording scheme (ArchSite) were also included but are presented after an assessment of the values of the site complex overall. To best understand the site complex it is necessary to consider the components present within it.

13. These assessments of value for each recorded site are also vital for informing potential research questions and the recording requirements should they be modified by the proposed activities. An accurate assessment of effects and appropriate Archaeological Management Plan and Research Strategy cannot be completed without this multi-scale consideration of the archaeology within the project area.
14. For FTAA purposes, as well as logistics for MGL, NZHP considered it vital to show how the full process of recording would look should the proposed works go ahead. For a project on this scale, it is imperative that a consistent system is put in place to identify where known archaeology and heritage sites are located and what considerations need to be made when undertaking the required recording. Site numbers as they appear on ArchSite were used as they are already established and will reduce the possibility for miscommunication when dealing with multiple parties during compliance and reporting processes.
15. The purpose of the heritage assessment submitted with the FTAA was to identify and assess the values of heritage sites and/or site complexes within the BOGP disturbance footprint, followed by an assessment of the effects of the proposed works on those sites, complexes and values, including those of the surrounding landscape and the relationships between the surrounding landscape and the site complexes within the DDF. Existing heritage protections were also identified, and the proposed works assessed against these.

Assessments of Archaeological and Heritage Values

16. To accurately and independently undertake this multi-scale assessment, I utilised established methods for assessing archaeological and heritage values that have been developed by NZHP over the past six years.
17. These methods follow the HNZPT criteria for heritage values as outlined in their 2019 *Significance Assessment Guidelines* in conjunction with defined parameters for levels of value within each criteria, which are not included in the 2019 *Guidelines*.
18. These parameters have been adapted from internationally accepted methodology originally introduced by the Department for Transport in England in 2008¹. An updated version of this methodology was released in 2020² but is not substantively different to the earlier version and as the values of some sites and complexes within the BOGP disturbance footprint had already been assessed for MGL by the time

¹ DfT. (2008). *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Volume 11, Environmental Assets; Section 3, Environmental Topics; Part 2 HA 208/7 Cultural Heritage*. Department for Transport and Highways England.

² Highways England. (2020). *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges LA 104 Environmental assessment and monitoring. Revision 1*.

this update was released, the same parameters were applied to all sites for consistency.

19. While the Department for Transport (now Highways England) developed these parameters for use on roading projects in England, NZHP has tested these on a wide variety of archaeological and heritage sites and landscapes around New Zealand, including goldmining and pastoral landscapes, and refined them where required. These methods have been subject to scrutiny by the planning system in the UK, are accepted internationally³ and used by international heritage bodies including the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), of which New Zealand is a part through ICOMOS Aotearoa New Zealand.
20. A modified framework for assessing the heritage values of the landscape (as opposed to individual sites) was developed using the Department of Transport criteria alongside the methods used for the Bannockburn Heritage Landscape Study (2004).
21. These methods have been used by NZHP to undertake archaeological and heritage impact assessments that have informed site protection and avoidance as well as those that have accompanied applications to modify archaeological and heritage sites under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014, the Resource Management Act 1991 and to secure access agreements and concessions through the Department of Conservation. These include archaeological authorities to modify goldmining sites in Teviot, Nevis Valley, Gabriels Gully and Maori Gully (West Coast). DOC was required to provide approval for the Maori Gully project and accepted our methodology for this purpose.
22. Comments from HNZPT, DOC and CODC state that our methods for assessing values are inappropriate for the perceived significance of the Bendigo landscape highlight the need for clearly defined methods and parameters for heritage values. Heritage is inherently subjective and no two assessments of heritage or archaeological value will give the exact same result. Contributing factors may include the experience level of the assessor, as well as their area of expertise, and personal, social or familial links to the area or type of heritage. Working with a defined set of criteria for levels of significance goes some way to mitigate this and allows for an independent assessment. DOC and HNZPT's statement that the area is too significant to adhere to these methods is circular reasoning. To ensure meaningful value assessments, all heritage should be assessed using the same methodology, and NZHP's consistent application of our methods achieves this.

³ Derek Worthing and Stephen Bond (2008), *Managing Built Heritage: The Role Of Cultural Significance*, Blackwell Publishing.

23. The methodology and presentation of the values assessment was a major focus of pre-application consultation with HNZPT during the first half of 2025. I worked closely with the Otago/Southland Regional Archaeologist at the time to ensure our assessment was presented in a way that was most helpful for her given the time pressures of the FTAA process.
24. As part of this process, it was agreed that the application for an archaeological authority for a proposed intensive drilling programme within the SREX orebody in the Rise and Shine Valley would be an opportunity for HNZPT to familiarise themselves with the project area and how our assessment would look for the wider project, including the methodology. NZHP and MGL were upfront that this was the area of highest archaeological significance within the project area (the Rise and Shine workings), and that the eventual project footprint would be larger. This authority (2025/574) was granted in July 2025 and the required Archaeological Management Plan and Research Strategy accepted by HNZPT in September 2025. I am the s45 approved person associated with this authority.
25. The HNZPT Archaeologist involved in the pre-application consultation was replaced in September 2025. All offers by NZHP to meet with the outgoing and incoming HNZPT Archaeologists to ensure a consistent understanding of the project and agreed outcomes of consultation to date were declined by HNZPT. As a result of this and other staff changes, the HNZPT team that took part in the pre-application consultation and those involved in all post-submission discussions and feedback only share one member (the Southern Region Senior Pouarahi).

Survey Methodology

26. DOC and CODC have identified concerns with the survey methodology used to inform the heritage assessment. There is no agreed best practice for archaeological surveying in New Zealand; however, NZHP has developed what we feel to be best practice for cultural resource management assessments. Those used for this project include:
- (a) Standard transects walked across the survey area (where possible). It must be noted that the topography and vegetation cover (scrub including briar and matagouri) over large parts of the BOGP DDF did not allow for this approach to be applied consistently.
 - (b) Keeping a detailed record of survey practices, including GPS track logging and detailed notes of the degree of accessibility for all parts of the survey area.

- (c) Use of detailed desktop archival research, LiDAR and historic and modern aerial photography to identify points of interest (POI) before undertaking pedestrian surveys. These POI are loaded into a handheld GPS unit to ensure all are inspected in detail in addition to walking the standard transects.
 - (d) Recording extents of all identified heritage sites and features using GPS, supplemented with aerial photography and/or LiDAR as required.
 - (e) Detailed photographic record of the survey and any identified features, accompanied by a POI and photograph log.
27. As outlined in B.34B, the BOGP DDF and surrounding area was surveyed through multi-phase systematic surveys from 2017-2025. CODC's heritage expert raises concerns that this renders the earliest survey data out of date. As stated in the introduction to Chapter 7 of B.34B, the continuous involvement of NZHP as heritage advisors to MGL during this period alongside repeated site visits has enabled us to monitor the sites visited during each survey phase and confirm they remain as described at the time of their initial survey. MGL has been committed to the avoidance of all heritage sites and features during this period, with the exception of installing a gate in a pre-1900 fenceline (G41/638) for which an archaeological authority was granted in 2022 (Authority 2023/107).
28. DOC considers that vegetation removal should be a standard part of a heritage assessment survey. The purpose of a survey at the assessment stage is to identify the presence, nature and current condition of heritage features within the survey area. Large scale removal of vegetation from around heritage sites changes their condition and does not accurately reflect their true state.
29. While allowed under the Conservation Covenant, the scale of vegetation removal required to record all sites within the BOGP disturbance footprint to the level of detail requested by Dr Schmidt is impractical and raises potential flow on effects for ecology, as well as risking exposing the heritage sites to weathering, instability, vandalism and stock damage. This recording is proposed to take place following the issuing of the archaeological authority and prior to any other modifications of the sites.
30. DOC considered that maps should have been produced for all site complexes as part of NZHP's surveys. Maps were not drawn of the sites and complexes within the BOGP footprint as these have already been completed by previous researchers, namely Hamel in *The Rich Fields of Bendigo* (1993). These maps and previous photographs were included in Chapter 6 of B.34A and B.34B, along with a detailed acknowledgement of previous archaeological investigations of the area. NZHP used

accurate GIS mapping to show the full extents of all sites identified within the project area, building on these previous records. Detailed maps of all site complexes will be produced during the recording phase.

31. At the culmination of our surveys, all site record forms were updated on ArchSite to ensure anyone working in the area had access to the most up to date information. The locations of all sites within the BOGP DDF were able to be confirmed.
32. To summarise, the NZHP methodology is robust, based on internationally recognised models and has been thoroughly tested on local and comparable sites and site complexes. The method deliberately utilises a multi-scale approach that considers relevant site level and broader landscape values in its assessment.

RESPONSES TO OTHER COMMENTS FROM REGULATORS

Advice to Decline Archaeological Authority Application

33. While the purpose of the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act is to promote the identification, protection, preservation, and conservation of the historical and cultural heritage of New Zealand, the Act provides a mechanism to lawfully modify or destroy of archaeological sites. NZHP agrees with HNZPT that the BOGP will have a major adverse effect on archaeology and heritage values, and only support the application for an authority subject to sufficient mitigation as outlined in the Heritage Assessment B.34B. NZHP believes the current application for an archaeological authority meets Section 2 of Schedule 8 Approvals Relating to HNZPTA 2014.
34. MGL have sought NZHP's advice and input on ways to limit the BOGP's impact to archaeological sites where practicable as per Policy 2.23a of HNZPT's Statement of General Policy. This has resulted in the relocation of mine infrastructure initially situated in the Rise and Shine Valley to the flats above Shepherds Creek, enabling the retention of 12 recorded archaeological sites. The proposed Come-in-Time access route has been designed to avoid all archaeological sites, and the proposed willow removal programme in Clearwater Creek will have a beneficial effect on at least 13 archaeological sites in this valley. Neither of these latter phases of works are included in the archaeological authority application as they do not require modification of archaeological sites.
35. The previous granting of authority 2025/574 to MGL to undertake an intensive drilling programme in the Rise and Shine Valley that would result in the loss of the majority of the Rise and Shine workings complex suggests that HNZPT has not previously considered the Rise and Shine workings complex (described by HNZPT

as the area of highest value within the project area) to be sufficiently significant to oppose its destruction as per Policy 1.31 and 2.25.

36. The current proposal offers greater levels of mitigation and offsetting than for Authority 2025/574 in recognition of the wider impact to archaeological and heritage gold mining site complexes and values, including measures that will protect and improve access to and understanding of the wider Bendigo heritage landscape, of which the BOGP DDF forms only a small part.

Issues with HNZPT Internal Assessment

37. The HNZPT assessment as presented in the s51 report, while largely copied from B.34B (Woods and Thorrold 2026), shows numerous fundamental misunderstandings of the Rise and Shine and wider Bendigo landscape, goldmining systems more generally and the extent of the Bendigo Conservation Covenant.
38. The HNZPT assessment notes that the *“first alluvial mining within Bendigo was concentrated in lower Bendigo Creek around the Rise and Shine Valley (as well as around Aurora Creek and Goodall’s Hotel) from around 1862 onwards”*. Bendigo Creek and Rise and Shine Creek are within two distinct valleys separated by a high ridgeline; as such this statement suggests a misreading of the geography, which is vital for understanding a mining landscape such as this.
39. In the same statement, HNZPT implies that the Rise and Shine Valley was the site of the earliest alluvial mining in the Bendigo area. This is incorrect as the Rise and Shine creek alone did not provide sufficient water, and it was not until the Rise and Shine water race was completed three years after mining began at Bendigo that alluvial mining could begin here in earnest. In the context of Otago gold fields in the 1860s, three years is a significant length of time, with some goldfields having a shorter life span. HNZPT is correct that the first mining and construction of this key water race was the work of a Swedish syndicate; however, their assumption that all mining work was undertaken by Swedes is not possible to prove with the existing records.
40. HNZPT correctly identify the Rise and Shine Dam (G41/269) as a key component of the Rise and Shine mining landscape; however, their description of this feature as a *“uniquely double-layered”* dam is misleading. Repeated clarifications to HNZPT that the unusual double layered dam described in Hamel’s 1993 report is not site G41/269 but instead site G41/235 (incorrectly numbered as G41/240 in B.34B but clarified as such with HNZPT through phone calls and emails) have gone unheeded. Hamel does not dwell on the Rise and Shine dam in her description of the landscape other than noting its existence and providing a sketch map. Dam G41/235 and its associated hut at the head of Aurora Creek are identified as one of the highest value features within the Bendigo Conservation Covenant (Condition 10).

41. HNZPT's description of the Rise and Shine dam as unique is also not a useful statement. All gold field dams are inherently unique – their designs were not based on any formal blueprint, instead they were constructed with the material at hand to suit the topography of the site.

The subsequent claim that dam G41/235 is irrelevant to the project area goes directly against HNZPT's opinion that the Bendigo landscape should be considered as a whole.

42. These misunderstandings continue with regards to water races in the Shepherds Creek complex at the northwestern end of the project area. HNZPT asserts that these races fed, among others, the Rise and Shine workings in the higher hill landscape to the southeast. If this were the case, the water would have had to be pumped uphill, and there is no record or evidence of this occurring.

43. Furthermore, the HNZPT assessment repeatedly misrepresents the extent and principal values identified in the Bendigo Conservation Covenant.

44. The HNZPT assessment states "*the principal historic values of the Conservation Covenant lie in the Rise and Shine Creek area.*" While the Rise and Shine Valley is identified as one of the main areas of historic significance, the Covenant also lists "*three stone buildings near Ardgour Road, stone yards near Shepherds Creek, the hotel foundations and environs and the bakery in the Town of Bendigo, the dam and dam keepers hut at the head of Aurora Creek, various mining sites in Perrys Creek and the environs, and stone yards near Devils Creek*" as areas of particular value.

45. HNZPT further incorrectly states that the Shepherds Creek water races and part of the Matakanui-Bendigo Road fall within the Covenant area. I disagree with those assessments as all are situated to the northeast, with the covenant area abruptly stopping at the edge of the Matakanui-Bendigo Road road reserve, avoiding its inclusion.

Vibration Risks to Surrounding Heritage Sites

46. HNZPT notes that recommendations regarding a preliminary vibration assessment were not incorporated in Assessment B.34B. The vibration assessment was completed following the submission of the updated heritage assessment to HNZPT for review (to which they did not respond). MGL remains committed to protecting all sites not included in the archaeological authority application from adverse effects, and measures to limit risks of vibration are summarized in Section 10.3.2 of the assessment. A confirmed process for protecting these sites will be included in the finalized Archaeological and Heritage Management Plan.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS REGARDING THE COME-IN-TIME BATTERY

Inconsistencies with Bendigo Conservation Covenant

47. The Otago Conservation Board notes correctly that “*any activity that comprises the integrity or setting of the Come-in-Time battery would conflict with the purpose of the [Bendigo Conservation] covenant and the CMS direction to protect historic values*”. This concern is mirrored by Sustainable Tarras.
48. This proposal includes an application to uplift the required portion of the Conservation Covenant; however, the Come-in-Time battery itself will continue to be protected. The archaeological authority application includes a proposal to modify up to two mine drives associated with the battery, located approximately 150m to the east of the battery itself.
49. Mr Sole (Sustainable Tarras’ Archaeology and Heritage expert) identifies in paragraph 53 of his statement of evidence that “*the Come-in-Time ore crushing and battery ore supply embankment are unstable with sections subsiding and there is evidence of adit wall rock fretting potentially from the project’s drilling and heavy machinery movements and road earthworks.*” The Heritage Assessment B.34B records this subsidence as evident in 2018 when the site was first systematically surveyed by NZHP (Section 7.10.4). MGL is proposing to fund strengthening of a retaining wall within this site complex, and the detailed recording of the impacted drives/adits will not only assist in furthering our understanding of this key heritage feature of the Bendigo landscape but also aid in planning for future site management and conservation.
50. Ongoing monitoring of the battery through annual condition checks and vibration monitoring will ensure the battery remains in a stable condition, and measures are proposed to reduce impacts of dust as outlined in the Archaeological and Heritage Management Plan (G.22).
51. MGL has committed to funding the restoration of a damaged stone retaining wall associated with the battery and to establish a replacement walking route to offset the removal of the current access track from Thomson Gorge Road.
52. While this replacement access route will be longer than the current track, it will provide visitors with a more complete experience of the Bendigo heritage gold mining landscape as it passes a range of heritage sites including dwellings, commercial premises, water races and areas of both alluvial and quartz mining. This contrasts with the current access that presents the battery as an isolated site.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS FROM SUSTAINABLE TARRAS

Heritage Value of Matakanui-Bendigo Road (G41/782)

53. Sustainable Tarras argues that the Matakanui-Bendigo Road (referred to in their s53 report and evidence of Mr Sole as the Shepherds Creek paper road) is of significant value (paragraph 56 of Mr Sole's statement of evidence). My assessment of the road's value is presented in the Heritage Assessment (B.34B) and does not reach this threshold when assessed following NZHP's methodology. Neither DOC or HNZPT have raised major concerns over the values assessment of this road.
54. Mr Sole refers to "*site damage*" relating to this road. The surface has been graded, but as this road was never finished, there was no heritage road surface.

Prior to MGL modifying the surface, the road was in use as a modern farm track and had been upgraded and maintained on multiple occasions. MGL self-reported potential site damage to HNZPT relating to two heritage culverts that had been partially covered by roading material on 12 November 2025 and were advised by HNZPT to work with NZHP to re-expose the culverts and assess if there had been any damage to the structures. This was undertaken on 26 November 2025 and all culverts were found to be intact with no damage. An informal update was immediately sent to HNZPT, followed by a formal report on 12 December 2025. HNZPT accepted this report on 19 February 2026, noting that the signage and fencing put in place by MGL was "*excellent*", and that while in the time between the exposure and acceptance of the report some material had slipped over one culvert during heavy rain, they were happy that the processes in place were sufficient.

Lack of Consideration of Less Adverse Options

55. The heritage assessment (B.34B) has been produced specifically for the FTAA. This document is the culmination of nine years of collaboration between MGL and NZHP to understand this heritage landscape, with most of the area surveyed and sites recorded before the proposed disturbance footprint was finalised. As stated in Section 10.3.1 of the assessment, those components of the mine that are not dependent on the location of ore bodies (i.e. pits) have been located in areas where they will have the lowest impact on heritage values and sites.

Potential for Unrecorded Heritage Features

56. I further note that Mr Sole notes in his evidence (for Sustainable Tarras) to have identified multiple new archaeological and/or heritage sites in and around the BOGP disturbance footprint. These findings have not been reported to NZHP, nor have any site record forms been created independently. As far as NZHP is aware, data and

information for all archaeological features Mr Sole identified within the project area during surveys undertaken on behalf of NZHP (Mr Sole subcontracted to NZHP for a period in 2021) were supplied to us and MGL. NZHP is not aware of any features that remain unrecorded in spite of their identification during the survey as Sole suggests in his evidence. An exception to this is one possible pack track outside the project area that requires further investigation to determine if it is archaeological in nature. The heritage assessment B.34B accounts for the potential to encounter further heritage sites and features within the BOGP DDF and includes a discussion of their potential values.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS REGARDING BENDIGO CONSERVATION COVENANT

Assessment of Proposal Against Bendigo Conservation Covenant

57. HNZPT, DOC, Sustainable Tarras, Forest and Bird, the Otago Conservation Board, and Environmental Defense Society Inc all provide similar comments that the proposal does not align with the objective or conditions of the Bendigo Conservation Covenant. I have provided my assessment of this in B.34B (Section 10.2).
58. I have assessed Hamel's 1993 'Rich Fields of Bendigo' and the 'Application for transfer of property rights' that informed the Covenant in relation to heritage. I have largely responded to both documents together as 'The Application for exchange of property rights' draws on Hamel's recommendations which I explain further below. I have not assessed the Draft Survey report for Protected Natural Areas Programme for the Lindis Pisa and Dunstan Ecological Districts (February 1987) as this does not pertain to heritage.
59. In 'The Rich Fields of Bendigo', Hamel offers the following recommendations for managing the historic values of the Bendigo heritage landscape:
- (a) "consideration should be given to retaining representative sites from each era – early alluvial mining, the main quartz mining period, turn of the century mining and 1930s quartz workings"
 - (b) There should be an emphasis on "intact, historically significant and informative sites, in good condition, still within an appropriate setting, and with an attractive landscape"
60. As mentioned above, 'The Application for exchange of property rights' draws on Hamel's recommendations, emphasising that those heritage sites proposed for protection should be considered alongside the Bendigo Historic Reserve as a

coherent heritage landscape and that it is imperative that measures are taken to allow for safe public access. The Come-in-Time battery is the only heritage site mentioned specifically in this document, noting that it will require “public access, interpretation and structural repairs”, but conservation and restoration of all heritage sites is considered to be of “considerable importance”.

61. Although the sites and site complexes within the proposed uplift area for the Bendigo Conservation Covenant (**the Covenant**) include good examples of mining from all eras outlined by Hamel, none represent the only example of such works within the Covenant area. While all archaeological and heritage sites are unique and therefore unable to be directly substituted, comparable examples of nearby sites from each era to those found within the uplift area are provided below:
- (a) Early alluvial mining systems: Sluicing and race system in tributary of Aurora Creek (Fig 28 in Hamel (1993)), Alluvial workings and huts along Bendigo Creek (G41/242; Fig 22 in Hamel (1993)).
 - (b) Quartz mining: the Alta workings (sites G41/252, G41/253, G41/254, G41/255, G41/590 and G41/671) and sites around the entrance to the Deep Level adit in the Bendigo Creek Valley. Note that these site complexes both appear to cover all periods of quartz mining identified by Hamel.
 - (c) A comparable example of a double layered stone-faced dam to site G41/269 is located at the head of Aurora Creek and recorded as site G41/235. This dam is highlighted by Hamel as the best example in the Covenant Area.
62. The principal heritage values of the Bendigo landscape, as assessed by Hamel, comprise the Rise and Shine Creek area, the Town of Bendigo, the stone buildings near Ardgour Road, stone yards near Shepherds Creek, the dam and dam keeper’s hut on Aurora Creek, mining sites in Perrys Creek and stone yards near Devils Creek.
63. Of this list of principal areas of value, only the Rise and Shine Creek area falls within the proposed uplift area. The other principal heritage values as assessed by Hamel will not be impacted by the BOGP as they fall outside of the direct disturbance footprint (**DDF**).
64. Special provisions are given in the Covenant (Condition 9) that the public must be allowed access to the sites along the Rise and Shine Creek Valley and to allow for woody vegetation to be cleared from around these sites and interpretive panels installed.
65. Public access to the Rise and Shine Creek area is currently provided by a 4WD public road (Thomson Gorge Road). No interpretation panels have been installed in

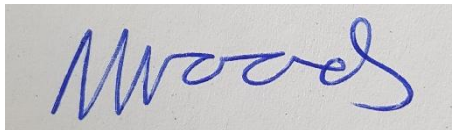
this area and there is no evidence of vegetation clearance being undertaken around historic sites during the life of the Covenant, with the exception of two sites that were cleared by Department of Conservation archaeologist Matthew Schmidt, accompanied by Neville Ritchie and Matt Sole, in late 2025. Most sites remain obscured by vegetation including grasses, briar and matagouri.

66. All sites within the BOGP DDF will be destroyed. An additional 12 recorded heritage sites to those that fall within the BOGP DDF will have their Covenant protections removed as part of the proposed Covenant uplift. However, all recorded sites outside the BOGP DDF will remain protected under the Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga Act 2014. Regular monitoring of the condition of these sites is proposed as a condition of this application to ensure they remain stable during the life of the mine. These sites are all within the Rise and Shine Valley, and include huts, hut terraces, an earth dam and tailings mounds.
67. It is important to note that the Covenant area and Hamel's 1993 report do not consider the Bendigo Historic Reserve area, which also contains excellent examples of all the mining features and systems described above. As Hamel notes at the start of her report, both the Bendigo Historic Reserve and the Covenant boundaries are largely arbitrary and not based purely on areas of known heritage, historical land parcels or mining areas.
68. The proposed works will see the loss of the current formed access track to the Come-in-Time battery site,; however, MGL is proposing to establish a new route that approaches the site from the Bendigo Historic Reserve (subject to further discussion and input from the Department of Conservation as to the final route). This route will take visitors through a more recognisable heritage landscape and will better emphasise the interconnected nature of the Bendigo mining landscape than the current access.
69. MGL proposes to install interpretation panels along this route (subject to relevant permissions) to improve the visitor experience.
70. While the proposal will see the loss of high heritage value components of the Rise and Shine Creek and wider Bendigo heritage landscape, the majority of this landscape will remain intact. Key components, such as the Come-in-Time battery, will be invested in by MGL, and alternative access provided for the public. The current access to this battery is from Thomson Gorge Road, and as a result the site is presented in isolation to the wider heritage landscape.
71. The proposed alternative access route is more aligned with the underlying principles of the Covenant than the current track as it provides a tangible connection from the main Bendigo Historic Reserve and will pass multiple heritage sites not currently

easily accessible to the public. The Rise and Shine valley sites are currently similarly cut off from the wider landscape and do not provide an easily accessible or readable heritage landscape for the general public. The sites within the proposed uplift area, but which are outside the DDF, will continue to be protected from modification by the HNZPTA 2014, and following mine closure will provide an excellent opportunity for an enhanced visitor experience when presented alongside the remains of a remediated modern mine.

72. Therefore, the proposal does not align with the particular aspects of Hamel's assessment and recommendations in regard to protecting the Rise and Shine Creek area and maintaining foot access to the heritage sites. The proposal does, however, align with the overall suggestions of Hamel that the wider Bendigo archaeological landscape, defined loosely by Hamel as the Bendigo Historic Reserve and all gold mining sites on Bendigo Station, should be available for the public to experience as a coherent and interconnected archaeological landscape featuring good representative examples of all stages and methods of mining undertaken here.
73. Both Hamel's report and the Application for exchange of property rights identify the Come-in-Time battery as a highlight of the area covered by the Covenant, and both documents stress the importance of linking this site to the wider archaeological landscape for visitors.
74. Hamel expressly states that a track from the Bendigo Historic Reserve to the Come-in-Time battery would provide "the visitor with the full chronological range of mining activities", and as such, MGL's proposal to instate such a route is consistent with the recommendations laid out in both documents.

75. While the broader Bendigo heritage landscape has been previously identified as regionally significant through its listing with HNZPT as an Historic Area, the proposed Covenant uplift will only impact a small part of this area (restricted to the Rise and Shine Valley), and will not reduce the Historic Area's significance to the extent it no longer can be considered regionally significant. As per Assessment B.34B, the Covenant area values and level of significance can be considered comparable to those of the Historic Area, and as the overall portion of the Covenant that is proposed to be uplifted is proportionally smaller than the impacted portion of the Historic Area and includes only one of the key heritage components that informed the original value assessment of the Covenant, the impact will be similar. As such, the Covenant values will not be impacted to such a degree that it is no longer regionally significant.



Dr Naomi Jane Woods

17 April 2026

APPENDIX 1 – HERITAGE SITE COMPLEX MAPS

Figure 1. Overview of heritage site complexes impacted by the BOGP DDF

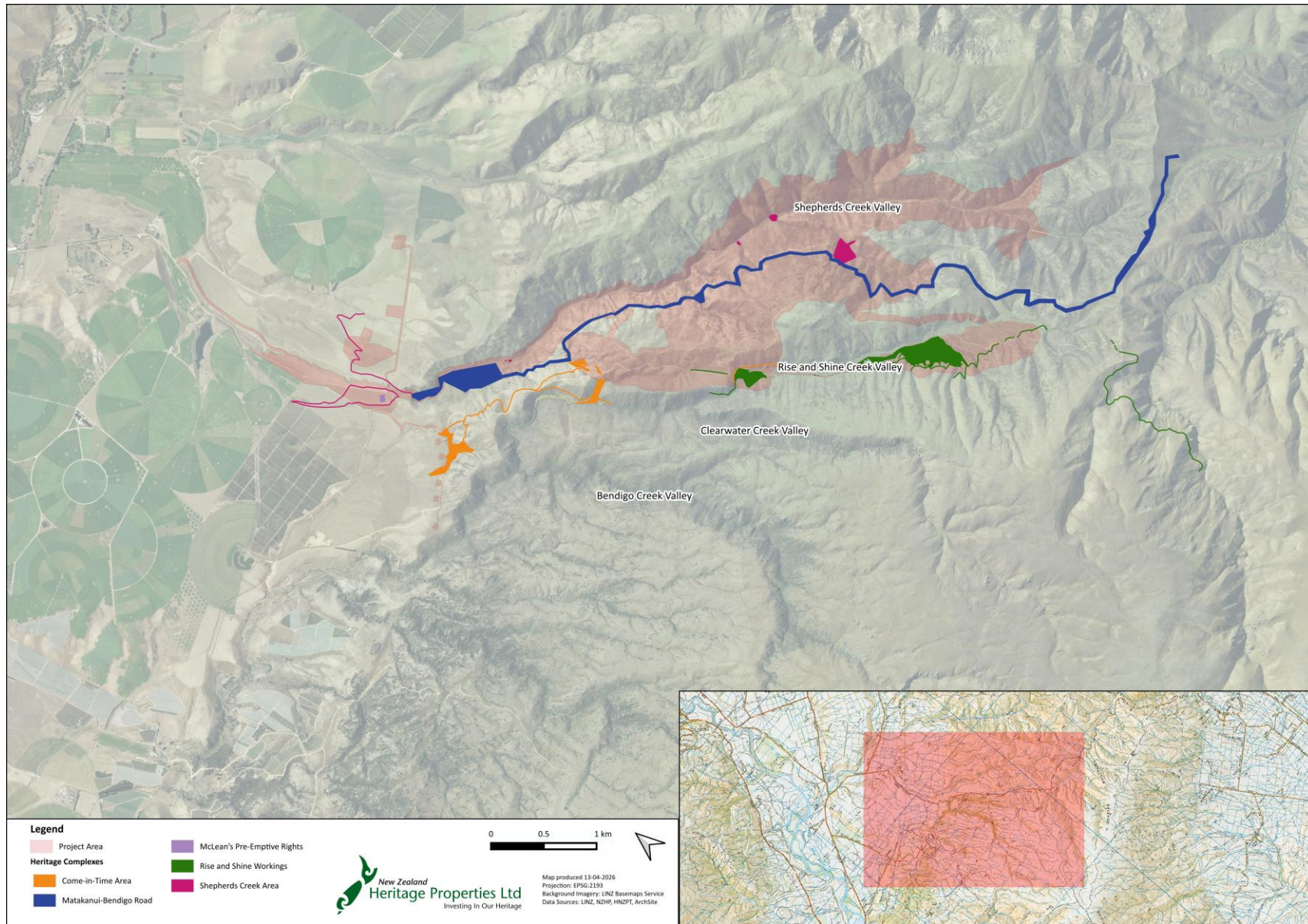


Figure 2. Detail of the Rise and Shine Complex (note that the Rise and Shine water race extends outside the image to the right).

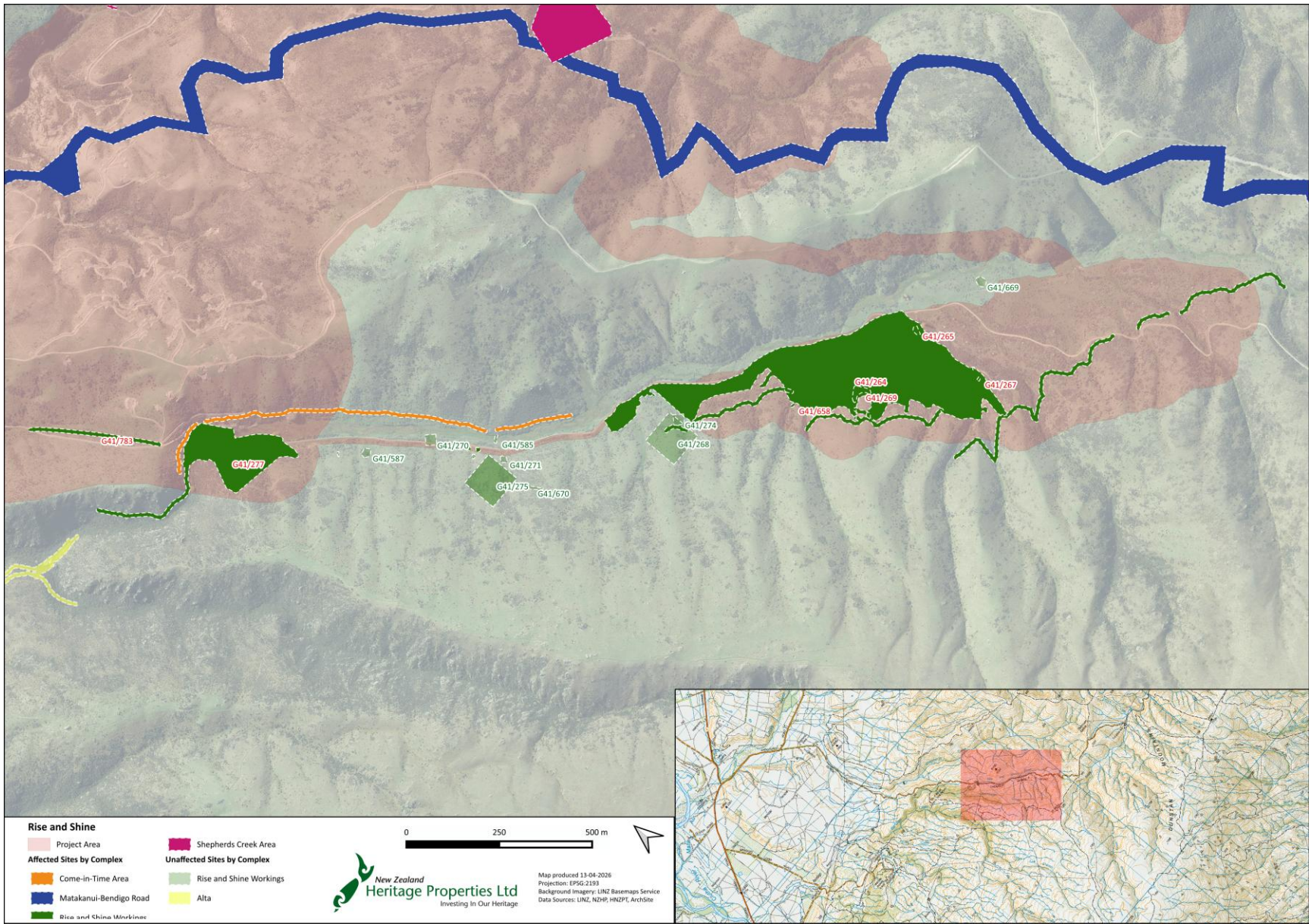


Figure 3. Come-in-Time and surrounding site complexes.

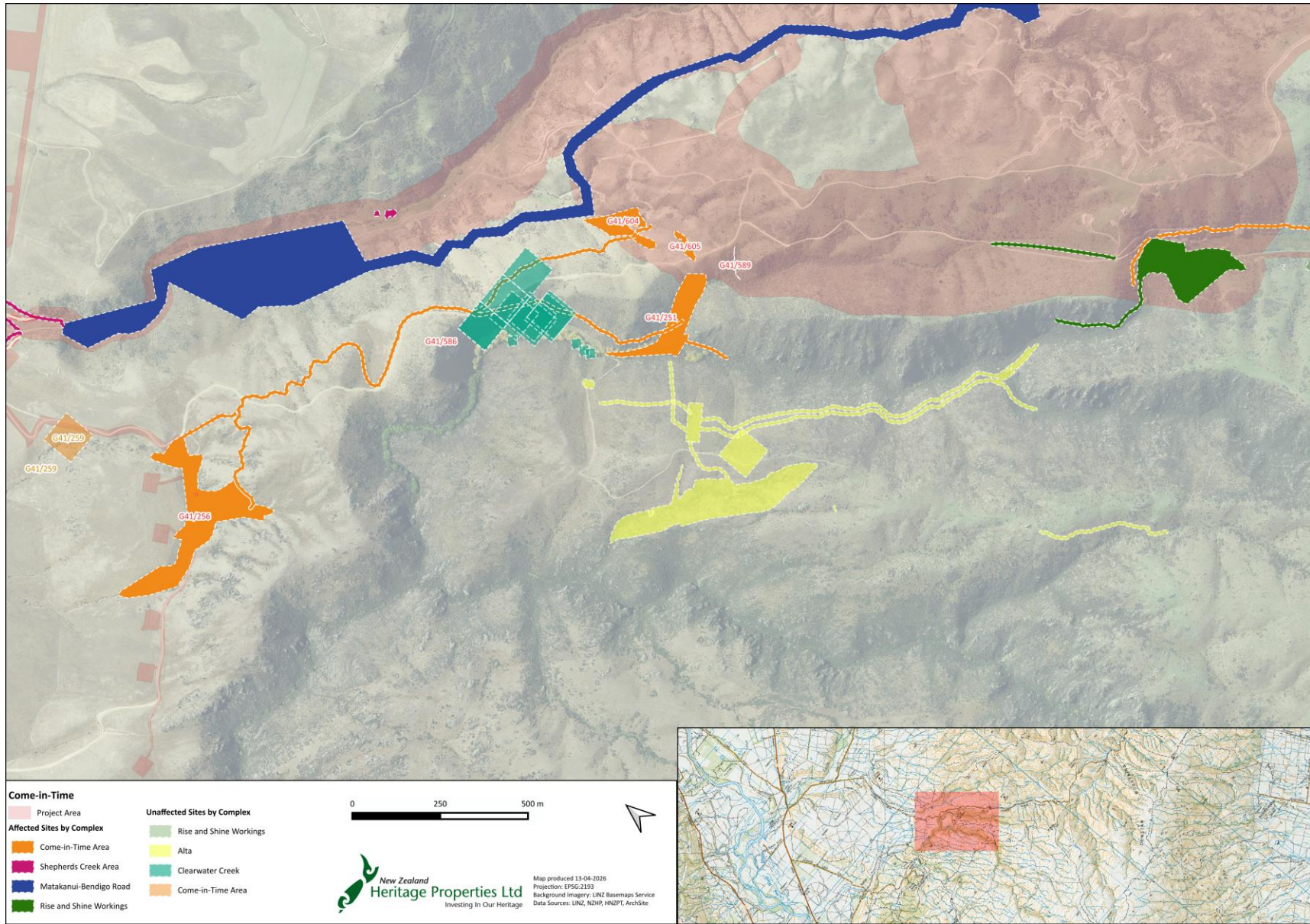


Figure 4. Shepherds Creek and Matakanui-Bendigo Road site complexes.

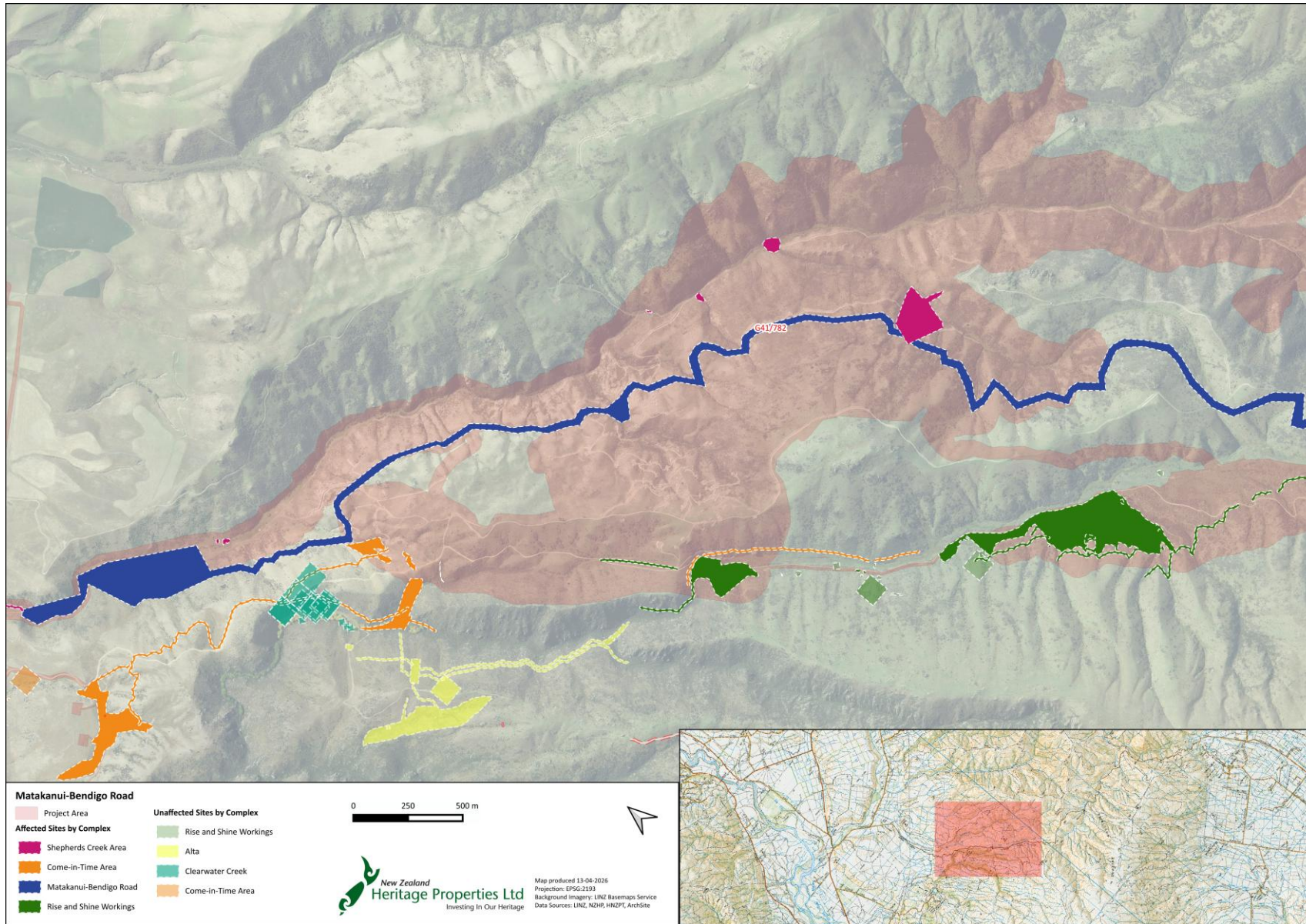


Figure 5. McLean's Pre-emptive Rights complex and lower Shepherds Creek water races.

