

**UNDER** the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024 (**Act**)

**IN THE MATTER** an application for approvals for the Waihi North  
Project (**WNP**) – a listed project described in  
Schedule 2 of the Act

**BY** **OCEANA GOLD (NEW ZEALAND) LIMITED**  
**Applicant**

---

**STATEMENT OF EVIDENCE BY KATE FEICKERT ON BEHALF OF  
OCEANA GOLD (NEW ZEALAND) LIMITED**

**Ecological Effects**

**Dated 1 September 2025**

---

**Counsel acting:**  
Stephen Christensen  
Project Barrister  
P 027 448 2325  
stephen@projectbarrister.nz

## **Introduction**

1. My name is Kate Feickert. My qualifications and experience, and my role in the Waihi North Project (**WNP**), are set out in my statement of evidence dated 24 January 2025 included in Part G of the substantive application document for the WNP.
2. I have been asked by OceanaGold (New Zealand) Limited to provide a response to the specific matters contained in written comments on the WNP application from persons invited by the Panel to comment under section 53 of the Act. In particular, I respond to:
  - a. Coromandel Watchdog of Hauraki Comment: Oceana Gold Waihi North Fast-track Approvals Application, including:
    - i. the expert statement of evidence of Professor Bruce Waldman; and
    - ii. the expert statement of evidence of evidence of Mr Hamish Kendal.
3. I have prepared this statement within the limited time available to me. Consequently, it is necessarily at a high level. I am able to provide a more fulsome response to the issues covered in this statement if the Panel requires further assistance from me.

## **Code of conduct**

4. I confirm that I have read the code of conduct for expert witnesses contained in section 9 of the Environment Court Practice Note 2023 and have complied with it in preparing this evidence. I confirm that the issues addressed in this evidence are within my area of expertise, and I have not omitted material facts known to me that might alter or detract from my evidence.

## Evidence of Professor Waldman

5. Coromandel Watchdog referring to evidence of Professor Waldman, following discussion of the impacts on Archey's frogs comments that:<sup>1</sup>

There are similar potential adverse impacts likely to be sustained by other species in the surrounding environment. This includes, for example, nationally endangered and vulnerable wetland tree types and lizards. In such cases, it does not appear as though the "Precautionary Principle" has been applied to avoid such effects where they are likely and unavoidable and more than minor.

6. It is unclear which wetlands Coromandel Watchdog is referring to with this statement.
7. Nonetheless, I refer to sections 4.3 and 5 of the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment for this application which I authored.
8. Section 4.3 summarises the findings of Williamson Water and Land Advisory (**WWLA**) in relation to the likelihood of dewatering of wetlands occurring as a result of the project. This found that all wetlands identified within the project area could be supported by climate alone and consequently any reduction in shallow groundwater levels is not expected to lead to a change in wetland extent throughout the project area. I have relied on these findings to support my ecological effects assessment.
9. In my view, section 5 adequately addresses the ecological impacts of dewatering to wetlands within the project area (which contain populations of Threatened, Nationally Vulnerable swamp maire (*Syzygium maire*)), how such impacts will be detected and management methodologies should dewatering be detected to protect the wetlands and the vegetation

---

<sup>1</sup> Initial Submissions for Coromandel Watchdog of Hauraki Inc, page 10, referring to paragraphs 32 – 41 of Professor Waldman's statement of evidence.

within. Based upon the findings of WWLA, we consider the project to have a low magnitude of effect upon wetlands within the Area of Investigation; corresponding to a moderate level of effect to wetlands when the 'very high' ecological value of the wetlands is considered. The Environmental Institute of Australia and New Zealand's (**EIANZ**) Ecological Impact Assessment Guidelines (Roper Lyndsey *et al.*, 2018)<sup>2</sup> which were used for determining the values and magnitude of effect, state that a low magnitude of effect is a 'minor shift away from baseline conditions'.

10. As per the EIANZ guidelines, a moderate level of effect requires effects management to be undertaken. Given the uncertainty in dewatering occurring and the subsequent likelihood of ecological impacts occurring to wetlands, the recommended management is first to monitor the wetlands considered most likely to be affected by dewatering. This would detect any ecological impacts to these wetlands.

### **Evidence of Mr Hamish Kendal**

#### *Rarity of wetlands*

11. In his statement of evidence at paragraph 19 Mr Kendal states that wetlands may be rarer than discussed in the Ecological Value section of the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment (B.46, Table 2), when considered on a national scale.<sup>3</sup>
12. I do not consider that a national scale is appropriate here. The EIANZ guidelines (Roper-Lyndsey *et al.*, 2018) suggest use of an 'Ecological District' scale for interpreting ecological values for terrestrial assessments and do not provide a scale for freshwater assessments or for wetland assessments. I am of the view that an ecological district scale is appropriate

---

<sup>2</sup> Roper-Lindsay, J., Fuller S.A., Hooson, S., Sanders, M.D., Ussher, G.T. (2018). Ecological impact assessment. EIANZ guidelines for use in New Zealand: terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems. 2nd edition. EIANZ, Melbourne.

<sup>3</sup> Statement of evidence of Hamish David Kendal on behalf of Coromandel Watchdog of Hauraki dated 19 August 2025.

for determining the ecological values of these wetlands, with reference made to regional and national data where relevant (e.g., for considering the threat classifications of the species present within the wetland a national scale was used and for rarity, a regional scale was used where reference data on wetland rarity at a regional scale was present). These are the scales that was used in the Wetland Ecological Effects (B.46) assessment. I can see no reason to depart from the EIANZ guidelines recommendations here.

13. As stated in the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment (B.46), I recognise that wetlands are a greatly reduced habitat type within the wider landscape, and wetlands vegetated with mature forest are also far rarer than they would historically have been. This has been considered when determining the ecological value of the wetlands within the site, with the wetlands scoring in the highest category for rarity (very high) and also within the highest ecological value category, 'very high'.

#### *Use of an Area of Investigation*

14. At paragraph [22] of his evidence Mr Kendal questions the 'Area of Investigation' used for the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment.
15. This Area of Investigation was developed by WWLA based on modelled depth to groundwater and predicted drawdown information. This was then used to determine the appropriate area for investigation.
16. Mr Kendal specifically questions why the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment uses an Area of Investigation where effects to wetlands were 'greatest' and speculates that impacts to wetlands may be wider than the Area of Investigation. As described above, the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment relied on modelled hydrological data from WWLA to determine an Area of Investigation. It is beyond my skillset as an ecologist to determine the appropriate extent of the area of investigation and better suited to a hydrogeologist to determine this.

17. In addition, findings from modelling by WWLA show that impacts of dewatering are not expected. Despite this, the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment provided recommendations for monitoring and effects management methodologies as a precaution, should any ecological impacts of dewatering be detected within wetlands.

*Impacts on swamp maire*

18. Mr Kendal also states at paragraph [33] of his evidence that added pressure from dewatering may be impactful to swamp maire already impacted by myrtle rust. I agree with this statement, which should be evident from Section 5.2 of the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment, and this has been considered when determining the ecological effects of dewatering.

*Effectiveness of mitigation measures*

19. From paragraph [42] of his evidence, Mr Kendal questions the feasibility and effectiveness of the mitigation measures for wetlands described in the Wetland Ecological Effects Assessment. These methodologies are described from the Wharekirauponga Mine Groundwater and Surface Water Management and Monitoring Plan. These methodologies are outlined as potential management techniques, however the decision to implement any such methodologies would generally not be made by an ecologist should the proposed wetland monitoring detect potential effects stemming from dewatering. Further ecological monitoring however could identify if the management techniques were working to return the wetlands to baseline conditions or if further effects management measures would be needed.

**Dated:** 1 September 2025

---

Kate Feickert